NATION

Coaching centres now death chambers: SC

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

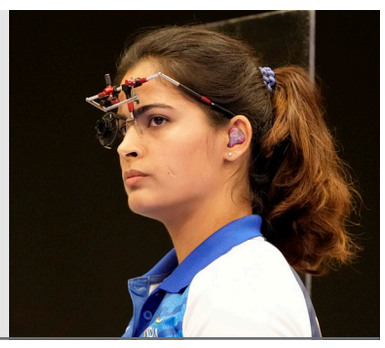
Govt: Assets worth ₹3.86L cr monetised in 3 yrs

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Manu to be India's flag-bearer for closing event

≫ Page: 8 ≪



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Hasina flees to India, Army says interim govt to take over

HASINA FLEES AS DHAKA BLEEDS

DHAKA, 5 AUG

With Bangladesh descending into chaos, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina surreptitiously fled the country for London in a military aircraft on Monday and the Army stepped in to fill the power vacuum, ending one uncertain chapter and opening another in the nation's restive history.

As news of Hasina's departure spread, hundreds broke into Hasina's residence, vandalising and looting the interiors, providing dramatic expression to the anti-government protests that have killed more than 100 people in the last two days.

At the centre of people anger is the Hasina government's controversial quota system reserving 30 per cent jobs for families of veterans who fought the 1971 liberation war.

With volatile crowds taking to the streets -- some clambering on Hasina's father and Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's statue and smashing it with hammers in a lasting image underscoring the fickleness of history -- Army chief General Waqar-uz-Zaman announced that the 76-year-old prime minister has resigned.

An interim government will be taking over, he said in a televised address amid feverish speculation about where Hasina was headed.Hasina will not make a political comeback, her son and former official adviser Sajeeb Wazed Joy said, asserting that she left the country for her own safety on her family's insistence.

Hundreds of violent protesters stormed and ransacked the official residence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday; In the videos shared on social media, people were seen eating leftovers at her home, taking away fish, sarees and resting on her bed

PHOTOS: SCREENGRAB

Hasina in India

Hasina landed at the Hindon airbase in Ghaziabad near New Delhi on her way to London, diplomatic sources in the Indian capital said.

Back home in Dhaka, restive crowds, their protests giving way to jubilation that the Hasina rule had ended, swarmed the airport and even spilled into the runway. The Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre in the city's Dhanmondi area was damaged. Four Hindu temples suffered "minor" damages across the country, eyewitnesses and a community leader said.The home of Dr Wajed Miah, Hasina's husband, was not spared either in the vortex of violence on Monday, local reports said.

What led to the protest?

Hasina has been ruling the strategically located South Asian nation since 2009. She was elected for a record fourth consecutive term and fifth overall term in the 12th general election held in January, The clashes between protesters demanding Hasina's resignation and the ruling Awami League supporters in different parts of Bangladesh on Sunday erupted days after more than 200 people were killed in violent clashes between police and mostly student protesters. At least 300 people have been killed within a fortnight. Earlier in the day, the government ordered a complete internet shutdown as protestors asked the general public to join a "Long March to Dhaka".

India on alert

India's Border Security Force (BSF) issued a "high alert" across all its formations along the 4,096-km India-Bangladesh border in the wake of the developments, officials said.

Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong said the state government has decided to impose a curfew along the international border with Bangladesh. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3, 5, 6 & 8

Crowds ransack PM Sheikh Hasina's ancestral home-turned-museum on Monday, where her father was assassinated in 1975

NSA MEETS HASINA, EAM HOLDS TALK WITH PM, RAGA

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Hours after Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina landed at the airbase near Delhi in a C-130J military transport aircraft of the Bangladesh Air Force, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval met her, the sources said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security on Monday night as the government's top brass was briefed about the situation in Bangladesh.

It is learnt that Jaishankar also apprised Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on the developments.

It is learnt that Hasina has been moved to a safe location and it is unlikely that she would leave India on Monday night.

The sources said Hasina's plan was to leave for London. However, certain issues have come up because of which there is some uncertainty in her original plan.

There is no official word on Hasina's arrival in Delhi and her meeting with the NSA.

India decided to provide a safe passage through the Indian airspace to Hasina's aircraft following a request from Dhaka, the sources cited above told PTI. *—PTI*

INDIA SUSPENDS TRAIN, FLIGHT SERVICES TO BANGLADESH

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, 5 AUG

All train services between India and Bangladesh have been suspended indefinitely, Railway officials said on Monday following unrest in the neighbouring country.

According to the Railway Ministry, Maitri Express, Bandhan Express and Mitali Express operated their last trips in mid-July this year and have been cancelled since then due to violent protests in Bangladesh.

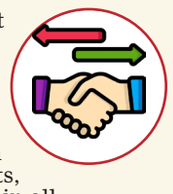
Both Maitri Express and Bandhan Express were initially cancelled from July 19, 2024, to 6 6 August, 2024, they said.

Air India and IndiGo cancelled scheduled flights to and from Dhaka with immediate effect on Monday .

INDO-BANGLA TRADE 'HALTED'

KOLKATA, 5 AUG

Indo-Bangladesh trade has 'halted' this afternoon amid unrest in the neighbouring country due to large-scale protests that resulted in President Sheikh Hasina resigning on Monday, according to traders.



On Sunday, the Bangladesh government announced a three-day trade holiday, excluding essential services, through a notification.

West Bengal Exporters Coordination Committee secretary Ujjal Saha said that due to lack of clearance from Bangladeshi customs at their land ports, export and import activities were stalled in all land ports.

Cabbie held for molesting woman in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 5 AUG

A 34-year-old woman was allegedly molested by a cab driver two days ago while she was waiting for a neighbour to join her for a morning walk. Suresh, the accused was arrested on Monday, police said. The incident which occurred at around 5am on 2 August in Konanakunte police station limits of South Bengaluru was caught on CCTV camera of a house on the road, and it went viral on social media platforms, they said.

—Salar News

B'luru CCB Inspector found hanging from tree

BENGALURU, 5 AUG

An inspector posted with the Central Crime Branch (CCB) of the Bengaluru Police was found dead on Monday in a deserted area of Bidadi, which lies in the outskirts of the city, police said. Inspector Thimmegowda, who was in his 50s, was found hanging from a tree on the outskirts of the city, they said. He was working with the Economic Offences Wing of the CCB recently, police said. . However, no note was found from him, a police official said. "No visible injury marks were found on his body. We don't know the exact reason which led him to take this extreme step. Only after we receive the post-mortem report, we can ascertain the exact cause of death, " a senior police officer said. The incident comes days after death of 34-year-old police SI Parashuram in Yadgir. *—PTI*

Market crashes nearly 3%; Sensex plummets 2,222 pts

MUMBAI, 5 AUG

Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty crashed nearly 3 per cent on Monday following extremely weak trends in global equity markets amid fears of a slowdown in the US economy.

30-share BSE Sensex plummeted 2,222.55 points or 2.74 per cent to settle at over a month's low of 78,759.40, marking its worst single-day retreat since 4 June, 2024. During the day, it tanked 2,686.09 points or 3.31 per cent to 78,295.86. The NSE Nifty slumped 662.10 points or 2.68 per cent to settle at 24,055.60. During the day, it tumbled 824 points or 3.33 per cent to 23,893.70. Nifty also saw its worst single-day fall since June 4, 2024, when markets crashed more than 5 per cent due to general election results. An over 12 per cent plunge in Japan's Nikkei and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East dented market sentiment, analysts said. Japan's benchmark stock index plunged 12.4 per cent on Monday, compounding a global market rout set off by investor concerns that the US economy could be headed for recession. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.93 per cent to USD 75.33 a barrel. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge dropped 4.21 per cent and midcap index plummeted 3.60 per cent. The broader Nifty of NSE dropped 1.17 per cent. In two straight sessions to Monday, Nifty and Sensex have corrected 4 per cent. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 7

PHOTO: PTI

LS passes bill to allow govt spends, applies guillotine

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

The Lok Sabha on Monday approved about Rs 140 lakh crore expenditure demands of different ministries of the Central government, completing two-thirds of the legislative approvals needed for the full Budget for 2024-25.

The lower house, which had last week debated on the Budget, approved the demands for grants as well as the Appropriation (No 2) Bill 2024, which authorises the government to use certain sums out of the Consolidated Funds.

This followed a guillotine being applied after taking up a discussion on demands for grants for four ministries -- Railways, Education, Health and Fisheries.

While the guillotine literally is a large, weighted blade used for executing a condemned person, in legislative parlance, it means to bunch together and fast-track the passage of financial business. *—PTI*

SO CLOSE, YET SO FAR

Sen's Bronze dream comes to an end

PARIS, 5 AUG

Young Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen suffered an inexplicable meltdown and missed out on an Olympic medal, going down in three games to Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia in the bronze playoff at the Paris Games here Monday.

A fired-up Sen was unstoppable in the beginning but a nine-point streak from Lee in the second game changed the complexion of the match as the world number 7 Malaysian registered a 13-21 21-16 21-11 win in a 71-minute clash to secure the bronze. "I had my chances in the second set and could have definitely done better. But credit goes to him. I think at the moment I'm just not able to think right now," Sen said.

- Neeraj Chopra would be eyeing another piece of history with his javelin when he takes aim at his second Olympics amid expectations of a golden finish again

"I came well prepared for this match as well. It has been quite a tough week overall. But yeah, the fatigue kept on building. But I mean, I was ready to give my 100 per cent in this match." Sen, who needed medical attention multiple times for a injured right arm, looked indomitable in the first 30 minutes but once Lee gathered himself from a position where he was down by a game and trailing 3-8 in second, the Indian did not seem to have a plan 'B'. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 8

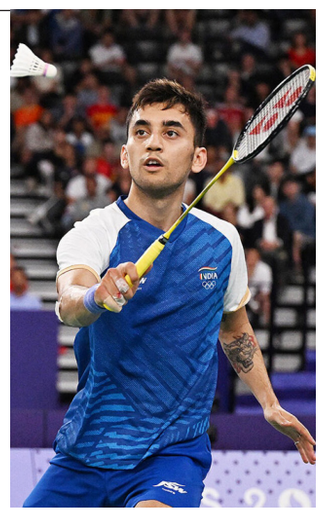


PHOTO: PTI

Modi terms abrogation of Art 370 'watershed' moment

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

On completion of five years of the abrogation of Article 370, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday described the step as a watershed moment in the nation's history that started a new era of progress in Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

The principal Opposition Congress criticised BJP's policy for the region, saying it neither respects 'Kashmiriyat' nor upholds 'Jamhuriyat'.

Modi assured the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Monday that his government would keep working for them and fulfil their aspirations.

Modi government had on this day in 2019 annulled Article 370 and Jammu and Kashmir state was also bifurcated into two Union territories. The government also scrapped Article 35A which was conceived exclusively for the "benefit" of Jammu and Kashmir through a Presidential order issued in 1954. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

'Was 2024 LS polls mandate stolen from people?'

BENGALURU, 5 AUG

After poll watchdog Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) claimed there were discrepancies in the number of votes polled and number of votes counted, another agency Vote for Democracy, Maharashtra, has raised similar concerns.

Its 223-page report titled 'Vote Manipulation and Misconduct during Voting and Counting', said "manipulated" figures of votes recovered and counted ensured that 79 seats in 15 states were arguably won by the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) through this hike of votes.

The break-up of the 79 seats: 18 in Odisha, 11 in Maharashtra, 10 in West Bengal, 7 in Andhra Pradesh, 6 in Karnataka, 5 each in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, 3 each in Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana, 2 in Assam and 1 each in Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat and Kerala.

"This sharp and significant spike in percentage of votes coupled with a stark increase of seats suggests that there has been a spurious injection/pumping in of votes. The question is: has the 2024 mandate been stolen from the people?" the report asked. The report has been authored by poll experts MG Devasahayam, Prof Pyara Lal Garg and Prof Harish Karnick. "Such manipulation could have been possible with Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) being tampered with or EVMs changed or replaced or their functioning was grossly defective," it added. In Karnataka, where Congress won 9 seats, BJP 17 and JD(S) 2, the report claimed the voter percentage hike in the State was 4.08% The estimated votes have been spuriously hiked to a staggering 22.33 lakh votes in all of Karnataka amounting to 79,743 votes per constituency.

DISCREPANCY IN LS VOTE TALLY

Voter percentile increase	Total voters
4.08	3.68 cr
22.33L votes hiked in	Average hike
28 seats	79,743

IN 6 SEATS NDA'S WINNING MARGIN IS LESS THAN THE VOTES INCREASED

Bengaluru Central	32,707 votes
Haveri	43,513 votes
Chitradurga	48,121 votes
Bagalkot	68,399 votes
Kolar	71,388 votes
Vijaypura	77,229 votes

Credit: Vote for democracy

This alleged dumping of votes and the falsified increase has been in favour of NDA. The constituencies where the ruling NDA won seats by a margin of less than 79,743 votes were taken into consideration. The NDA would have lost six seats if the alleged falsified increase hadn't taken place: Bengaluru Central where BJP won by just 32,707 votes, Haveri by 43,513 votes, Chitradurga by 48,121 votes, Bagalkot by 68,399, Vijayapura by 77,229 votes and JD(S) in Kolar by 71,388 votes, the report said.

The report said the hike was particularly high in states where BJP/NDA faced a challenge. Despite a hike, BJP still lost the game while in some places like the Andaman Nicobar Islands with a 7.23% hike, NDA/BJP won, the report said. How the votes might have been manipulated? "The irrational phasing of the elections, the insistence of ECI on the issue of actual turnout figures for each constituency by the next day as promised on 19 April, data being camouflaged, the stand of ECI on the VVPAT demand, the Surat episode where ECI appeared in a hurry to declare the poll result without elections after one Congress candidate was "disqualified" in a controversial move, all put together have raised serious doubts about the voter turnout data being kept from the public, and later substantially altered/changed," the report said.

—Salar News

Rameshwaram Cafe blast: NIA conducts spot inspection

BENGALURU, 5 AUG

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday brought two accused arrested in the Rameshwaram Cafe blast to the spot for inspection as part of its investigation into the incident that occurred on 1 March, police sources said. During the course of its investigation into the Cafe blast, the NIA has conducted extensive searches at more than 29 locations across the country. The inspection was carried out amid heavy police presence deployed outside the Cafe and barricades were also erected in the surrounding area. According to officials, the NIA, which took over the case on 3 March, had on 12 April arrested two key accused— mastermind Adbul Matheen Ahmed Taahaa and Mussavir Hussain Shazib (the perpetrator of the attack)— from their hideout in Kolkata, where they were staying under assumed identities. The duo, along with co-accused Maaz Muneer Ahmed and Muzammil Shareef, a resident of Khalsa in Karnataka's Chikkamagaluru, have already been arrested by the NIA. The NIA has so far arrested five people in connection with the bomb blast at the Cafe in Brookfield area of the city in which as many as 10 people were injured on 1 March. *—Salar News*

K'taka to host human-elephant conflict conference

BENGALURU, 5 AUG

The Karnataka Forest Department is set to host an international conference on the human-elephant conflict at the Gandhi Krishi Vigyan Kendra (GKVK) campus of The Agricultural University, Bengaluru on 12 August, World Elephant Day. Forest, Ecology, and Environment Minister Ishwar Khandre announced that the conference will see participation from over 17 delegates from 11 countries, including the US, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom, alongside 660 delegates from various Indian states. This initiative came after the state saw a significant rise in the population. The state currently stands at 6,395 elephants, the highest in the country, and 563 tigers, ranking second. Discussions will focus on strategies and practices to prevent elephants and other wildlife from encroaching and stringent anti-poaching measures. *—Salar News*

BJP-JD(S) Mysuru Chalo yatra enters Day 3

The march started from Kengal & covered distance of 20 km to reach Nidaghatta in Mandya

RAMANAGARA, 5 AUG

The Opposition BJP and JD(S), on Monday continued their week-long protest march from Bengaluru to Mysuru for the third day, against an alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority site allotment scam seeking to corner the Congress government and Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

'Mysuru Chalo' padayatre (foot march) -- against the alleged fraudulent allotment of sites to land losers by Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), including to Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi, and demanding his resignation -- on its third day, began at Kengal, and is scheduled to cover a distance of 20 km to reach Nidaghatta in Mandya district.

BJP State president and MLA BY Vijayendra, Opposition Leader in the Assembly R Ashoka, several JD(S) leaders, legislators, leaders and workers from both parties took part, as the march began at Kengal.

Later in the day, JD(S) State President and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, his son and party leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy too joined the protest march along with several other leaders.

A large number of workers and leaders from both parties were seen marching shouting slogans against CM Siddaramaiah and the Congress government led by him, holding BJP and JD(S) party flags and placards, amidst sounds of drum beats.

BJP senior leader BS Yediyurappa with Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, BJP State President BY Vijayendra during their Mysuru Chalo padayatra from Kengal to Channapatna **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Reacting to Yediyurappa's demand for his resignation, Siddaramaiah said in Belagavi, there is a Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) case against the former and asked "is he fit to continue in politics."

Channapatna is crucial for both the ruling Congress and the BJP-JD(S) alliance, as the Assembly segment will be going for by-polls, after Kumaraswamy vacated the seat following his election to Lok Sabha from Mandya.

In the MUDA 'scam', it is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the Authority. *—PTI*

CM: Ready to fight legally on Guv's nod for prosecution

BELAGAVI, 5 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said that the Congress government led by him is ready to fight legally and politically, in case Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot rejects the Cabinet's advice to withdraw the "show-cause notice" to him in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam', and grants permission for prosecution.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "We have said that the show-cause notice has to be withdrawn. Also, we have asked for the petition by TJ Abraham (activist) seeking permission for prosecution to be rejected. Let's see what decision the Governor takes.

PHOTO: PTI

He has not made a decision yet."

Based on a petition filed by advocate-activist TJ Abraham, the Governor had issued a "show-cause notice" on 26 July directing the chief minister to submit his reply to the allegations against him within seven days, as to why permission for prosecution should not be granted against him. *—PTI*

MUDA SCAM HAPPENED DURING BJP RULE: MINISTER

BENGALURU, 5 AUG

Medical Education and Skill Development Minister Sharan Prakash Patil on Monday defended Chief Minister Siddaramaiah against allegations related to MUDA scam, lashing out at the alliance of BJP-JD(S) and the Governor for issuing a showcause notice.

Patil said the scam occurred during BJP's rule and no one is above the law. The minister criticised JD(S) for striking an alliance with BJP, labelling it as unethical and disgraceful. Patil recalled how Congress, despite having 30 seats, made JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy the chief minister in 2018. *—Salar News*

BJP worker dies due to heart attack during padayatra

A 72-year-old BJP worker died of a heart attack during 'Mysuru Chalo' padayatra of NDA at Channapatna on Monday. Gowramma, a resident of Banashankari in Bengaluru, suffered a heart attack and collapsed during the padayatra at Channapatna, a statement by BJP said. She was taken to the hospital and was declared dead. —Salar News

₹ 1.2L aid for homes damaged in rain: CM

BELAGAVI, 5 AUG

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said the state government has decided to provide a house along with Rs 1.2 lakh compensation for those whose houses were completely damaged due to rain.

He visited the flood-affected areas in the district today.

Responding to a media query on BJP's allegations that the State government was discriminating in disbursing compensation for damaged houses, he said earlier BS Yeddyurappa had announced Rs five lakh compensation for completely damaged houses.

This aid was misused. And for many, only the first instalment has been released, and the second and third instalments had not been received till now.

According to him, many parts of the State have suffered damage due to rains. Relief works have been started everywhere. "I have visited Mysuru, Hassan, Kodagu districts and compensation has been disbursed for loss of human lives and death of livestock. All steps are being taken like compensation for fallen houses, repair of electric poles, transformers etc. It has been raining continuously for the last 42 days in Belagavi. In this background, it has been suggested to declare a holiday for Anganwadis also," he said.

- More rain is forecast for next week. For this, all the departments including revenue, disaster management, and irrigation have been asked to be careful

More rain is forecast for next week. For this, all the departments including revenue, disaster management, forest, energy and irrigation have been asked to be careful, he said. *—PTI*

ACTION IF PROVEN GUILTY, SAYS HM ON PSI DEATH CASE

BENGALURU, 5 AUG

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Monday said that action will be taken against a Congress MLA and his son who are facing allegations in connection with the death of police sub-inspector Parashuram in Yadgir, if they are found guilty in the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) probe.

He also said the government has decided to give a job to the deceased officer's wife.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "The government has decided to give a job to his wife. She is educated. I have discussed this with the chief minister. We will give her a job and compensation."

Regarding the allegations against MLA Chennareddy Patil Tunnur and and his son Pampangouda, he said, "CID investigation is on. Let's see what comes in the report. In case they are involved, whatever action has to be taken, will be taken." —PTI

7 locations proposed for 2nd airport in City: Patil

BENGALURU, 5 AUG

Karnataka Minister for Infrastructure MB Patil on Monday said that seven locations have been identified for the proposed second airport for Bengaluru. He said that a meeting will be held on Tuesday with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to discuss submitting an application to the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

Speaking to reporters here, the minister said that meetings were held with Infrastructure Development Corporation (Karnataka) Limited (IDeCK) and global consulting firm Boston Consulting Group (BCG) on Monday.

Initially, IDeCK had identified nine potential sites, but two were later removed from the list due to non-feasibility, he said. BCG representatives also shared their experience with the airport project in Navi Mumbai. Visual presentations prepared by both entities were reviewed during the meeting.

"We will submit the application to AAI, detailing all seven identified locations. AAI officials will then visit the sites to assess feasibility. The final decision will be based on factors such as passenger density, connectivity, industrial growth, cargo potential, and environmental considerations like the presence of rivers, hills, and biodiversity," Patil said.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar stated that Patil has already held several rounds of meetings with various stakeholders regarding the construction of the airport. The government aims to complete the second airport by 2033, he added.

Patil emphasised that the decision on the location of the second airport will not be based on political considerations. It will be guided by approximately 15 parameters set by the AAI, as well as the overall development of Karnataka, including Bengaluru. *—PTI*

CENTRE PARTIAL TO K'TAKA OVER MEKEDATU: MDMK

CHENNAI, 5 AUG

MDMK leader Vaiko has accused the Central government of being "partial to Karnataka" regarding the Mekedatu dam issue.

He further expressed confidence that all the political parties in Tamil Nadu oppose Mekedatu dam construction. "We won't allow it," he added.

The Mekedatu project is a multi-purpose project involving the construction of a balancing reservoir near Kanakapura in Ramanagara. This is proposed to be built on the Cauvery basin in State, and is expected to be a solution to the Cauvery water sharing row between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. , A perennial flashpoint between both the states, remains a pressing concern despite efforts at resolution.

On 29 July, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that Tamil Nadu would benefit more from the Mekedatu project. *—ANI*

Medical Education Minister SR Patil with MLA Rizwan Arshad inspect Bowring Hospial in Shivajinagar, Bengaluru on Monday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Bowring Hospital to be a super speciality centre

BENGALURU, 5 AUG

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical College and Research Institute in Shivajinagar will be transformed into a 10-storey super specialty hospital, said Medical Education and Skill Development Minister Sharan Prakash Patil on Monday.

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical College and Research Institute was formerly known as Bowring and Lady Curzon Medical College and Research Institute. "The new 500-bed facility will cater to the needs of the poor and underprivileged and would offer free health services," Patil said.

Charaka Super Specialty Hospital in Shivajinagar, which was closed down in 2021 due to the lack of funds, would be reopened in September, the minister said. *—Salar News*

NETIZENS RAISE CONCERNS

Thunderstorms bring IT hub to a standstill again

BENGALURU, 5 AUG

Moderate to intense storms lashed parts of rural and urban Bengaluru as well as near Mysuru region on Monday evening, bringing the IT hub to a standstill due to widespread waterlogging resulting in traffic snarls, which prompted vexed commuters to vent on social media.

According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) Bengaluru, apart from the IT hub, Chikkaballapura, Hassan, Kolar, Mandya and Ramanagara districts also experienced light thunderstorms with rain.

PHOTO: PTI

Bengalureans stuck in inordinate traffic jams remarked on various social media platforms about how just a couple of hours of thunderstorms had brought the City to a dead stop, and posted videos and updates from their respective regions across Karnataka on X.

X users like @aatreyi_bose complained of waterlogging across the city of Bengaluru. Traffic police too used X to warn people of traffic snarls caused by waterlogging.

According to X handle Karnataka Weather, which tracks rainfall over the state, thunderstorms also hit parts of Kodagu district.

According to IMD, on 6 Augustisolated heavy rain is very likely to occur in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada districts. It has also issued a high wave alert for the coast of Uttara Kannada. *—PTI*

SIT files preliminary chargesheet in Valmiki scam

BENGALURU, 5 AUG

Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the misappropriation of funds from State-run Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribe Development Corporation has filed a preliminary chargesheet mentioning the arrest of 12 people and the seizure of Rs 49.96 crore in the case, police said on Monday. But former minister B Nagendra, who resigned over the scam, was not named in the chargesheet.

The Opposition BJP and JD(S) have been demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the scam. The corporation's former officials including ex-managing director JG Padmanabha and ex-accounts officer Parashuram Durgannanavar; First

PHOTO: PTI

Finance Credit Co-operative Society Limited Chairman Sathyanarayana Etakari; Nekkunte Nagaraj, an acquaintance of former minister Nagendra; and brother-in-law of Nekkunte Nagaraj Nageshwar Rao.

According to the chargesheet, a total of eight cases have been registered at High Grounds Police Station in connection with the scam. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

R'than: Martyred Agniveer's kin to get Kargil aid

JAIPUR, 5 AUG

A Kargil package will be given if an Agniveer from Rajasthan dies in combat, the Rajasthan government informed the legislative assembly on Monday. "Since Agniveer is also a part of the armed forces. Therefore, if he is declared a Battle Casualty (Fatal), then all the facilities payable by the state government under the Kargil package will be applicable to Agniveer," the government said in response to a query about relief package to Agniveers posed by Leader of Opposition Tikaram Jully. The families of fallen soldiers in the state are given cash, land, and government jobs under the revised Kargil package. —*PTI*

SAD Chief writes to Akal Takht, seeks 'forgiveness'

CHANDIGARH, 5 AUG

In a letter to the Akal Takht jathedar, Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal has sought "unconditional forgiveness" for "all mistakes" committed when the party was in power in Punjab. Rebel Shiromani Akali Dal leaders, including former MP Prem Singh Chandumajra and ex-Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) chief Bibi Jagir Kaur, appeared before the Jathedar on 1 July and sought forgiveness for "four mistakes" committed during the party's government between 2007 and 2017. The Akal Takht Secretariat in Amritsar on Monday released a copy of the three-page letter that Badal submitted to Giani Raghbir Singh, the Akal Takht Jathedar on the rebel leaders' accusations, on 24 July. —*PTI*

Akhil quits as WB Minister, says will not say sorry

KOLKATA, 5 AUG

A day after the Trinamool Congress leadership asked him to step down from the Ministry and apologise to a forest department woman official for threatening and verbally abusing her, West Bengal Correctional Services Minister Akhil Giri on Monday said he had sent his resignation to the Chief Minister's Office. The TMC MLA from Ramnagar, however, said that he would not apologise to any official but to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The Ramnagar MLA further alleged that small-time businessmen had paid forest department officials bribe to start shops on department land near the Tajpur sea beach in Purba Medinipur district. Giri, who has been with the TMC since it was founded in 1998, said he would write in detail to the CM regarding the events that led to his losing cool. —*PTI*

Anil claims ex-cop targeted him on Fadnavis' behest

MUMBAI, 5 AUG

Former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh on Monday claimed Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had tried to save ex-Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh from arrest by asking him to level allegations against Deshmukh to topple the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government. Fadnavis dismissed Deshmukh's claims as lies, but did not elaborate further. BJP said it was a strategy to defame Fadnavis, and asked how could a leader who was then in Opposition ask a police officer. When Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA was in power in 2021, NCP (SP) leader Deshmukh resigned as home minister after Singh accused him of setting a target to collect Rs 100 crore a month. Deshmukh has claimed that dismissed police officer Sachin Waze was levelling allegations against him at the behest of Fadnavis. —*PTI*

Oppn vows to oppose bill to amend Wakf Act

BJP defends move, says it will ensure transparency

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Several Opposition leaders on Monday alleged that the BJP-led government wants to bring a bill for amending the Wakf Act to create a divide in the society and asserted that they will strongly oppose such a legislation.

Several BJP leaders, however, strongly defended the imminent move, stressing that the Modi government has always worked with the intention of bringing transparency in every sphere.

The bill to amend the Wakf Act, 1995, if it is introduced and passed, will make it mandatory for the Wakf boards to register their properties with the district collectors to ensure their actual valuation. There are 30 Wakf boards in the country.

The sources on Sunday pointed out that the revenue generated by all Wakf properties is estimated at Rs 200 crore per annum. This is not in sync with the number of properties such bodies have, they said.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind asserted that bringing about any change in the status and nature of Wakf properties or making it easier for the government or any individual to misuse them is unacceptable PHOTO: ANI

The government is all set to bring a bill in Parliament to amend the 1995 law governing the Wakf boards to ensure more accountability and transparency in their functioning and mandatory inclusion of women in these bodies, sources said on Sunday.

They claimed that the move comes in the backdrop of demands from within the Muslim community.

Can't accept amendment to reduce powers: Jamiat

With the government likely to table in Parliament a bill to amend the Wakf Act, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind on Monday asserted that bringing about any change in the status and nature of Wakf properties or making it easier for the government or any individual to "misuse" them is unacceptable. The prominent Muslim body also stressed that it is prepared to knock the doors of the Supreme Court if a move is made to weaken the Wakf boards. —*PTI*

Didi urges for peace in WB amid B'desh turmoil

KOLKATA, 5 AUG

Amid the ongoing unrest in neighbouring Bangladesh, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday appealed to the people of the state to maintain peace and avoid provocation and urged political parties to refrain from making controversial remarks.

Declining to comment on developments in Bangladesh, the chief minister said it is a matter for the Ministry of External Affairs to respond.

"I would appeal to all citizens of West Bengal to maintain peace and avoid all forms of provocation. I appeal to people of all communities with folded hands to remain calm and not engage in any communal behaviour or take the law into their own hands," Banerjee told reporters at the West Bengal Assembly.

"Whatever decision the Centre takes on this issue, we will abide by it," she said.

Banerjee urged political parties not to post or comment on anything that will disrupt peace.

"We are all concerned about the situation in Bangladesh. One must not write or post something that may disrupt peace in Bengal or the country. I urge leaders of all political parties and everyone else not to post anything that will disrupt peace here," she said.

Mamata Banerjee PHOTO: PTI

Banerjee said the BJP leaders have already posted certain things, which she felt is not appropriate.

"I will also urge our leaders not to say or post any such thing," she said.

The police also urged people not to upload 'provocative' posts on social media and not to pay heed to rumours.

The state police's appeal came after certain posts appeared on social media regarding the ongoing situation in Bangladesh.

"The state administration is alert and vigilant. Keep calm and maintain peace. Given the current situation in neighbouring Bangladesh, we have noticed a few posts and videos on social media that may create discord and unrest," the state police posted on the X handle.

—*PTI*

WB Assembly passes resolution against division of state

KOLKATA, 5 AUG

In a rare show of bonhomie between the ruling TMC and the Opposition BJP, the West Bengal Assembly on Monday unanimously passed a resolution opposing any attempt to divide the state.

BJP, which has been accused of fueling demands for the division of West Bengal, maintained that it is opposed to the idea of bifurcation of the state, and rather wants its development, especially of the northern parts.

"We believe in cooperative federalism. We are opposed to any attempt to divide the state," Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said while speaking on the motion.

"Bengal has fought for India's freedom and Bengal's culture and heritage is important for the entire country... Let us work together for the development of northern West Bengal. Don't judge our commitment towards the region only by funds under the North Bengal Development Department," she said.

Leader of Opposition in the assembly, Suvendu Adhikari, proposed the inclusion of a line in the motion: "We want overall development of united West Bengal."

"We are against any attempt to divide West Bengal. But this motion that was read out here sounds more like the pamphlet of a political party. We think that this resolution can be passed unanimously if the line I had mentioned can be included," he asserted.

The proposal was accepted by Banerjee, paving the way for unanimous passage of the resolution.

Several BJP leaders have openly demanded a separate UT of North Bengal.

Adhikari clarified that Majumdar never spoke in favour of the division of West Bengal. —*PTI*

SETBACK FOR AAP

SC backs LG's right to nominate aldermen to MCD

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

In a major setback to Delhi's Aam Aadmi Party government, the Supreme Court on Monday ruled that the law "expressly enables" the lieutenant governor to nominate aldermen to the MCD and he is not bound by the advice of the council of ministers in the matter.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala rejected the Delhi government's plea challenging the LG's power to nominate 10 aldermen in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi without the aid and advice of the council of ministers.

The apex court pronounced its verdict on the Delhi government's plea after reserving it for nearly 15 months.

In its ruling impacting the fraught relationship between the LG's office and the AAP-led Delhi government, the bench said the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act as amended in 1993 "expressly enables the LG to nominate persons having special knowledge to the corporation".

PHOTO: PTI

It said the power expressed by the statute in the name of the LG, also seen in the context of other provisions, demonstrates the statutory scheme in which the powers and duties are distributed among authorities under the Act.

The bench said the statutory power under provision 3(3)(b)(1) which deals with nomination of persons having special knowledge was vested with the LG for the first time by the 1993 amendment of the DMC Act of 1957.

—*PTI*

Govt introduces Bill in LS to reserve seats for STs in Goa

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Monday introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha to provide reservation to Scheduled Tribes (ST) in the Goa Legislative Assembly.

As of now, the ST community has no seats reserved in the state's assembly.

The bill is titled Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Tribes in Assembly Constituencies of the State of Goa Bill, 2024 and will empower the census commissioner to notify the population of STs in Goa.

According to the Bill, the population of the Scheduled Tribes has increased considerably in Goa as per 2011 census vis-à-vis 2001 census figures.

It noted that a "peculiar situation" has arisen in the state, wherein the population of the STs there vis-à-vis the population of SCs is considerably higher -- as per the Primary Census Abstract, 2011 for Goa.

The Bill will empower the census commissioner to notify the population of STs in Goa.

Based on it, the Election Commission will amend the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 2008, to make way for ST reservation in the 40-member Goa assembly.

The proposal to bring the Bill was cleared by the Union Cabinet in March this year, days before the schedule for the Lok Sabha elections was announced on 16 March.

—*PTI*

BJP to head 7 LS committees

BJP may get the chairmanship of seven to eight parliamentary committees of the Lok Sabha, Congress three and the Samajwadi Party one, sources said. —*PTI*

Mudra loan NPAs fall to 3.4%: FM

Public sector banks' Non-Performing Assets associated with the Mudra loan category has declined to 3.4 per cent Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. This marks an improvement from 4.77 per cent in 2020-21.

—*PTI*

Time yet to arrive to make Udhayanidhi DyCM, says Stalin

CHENNAI, 5 AUG

DMK President and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Monday admitted that the clamour within his party has grown stronger to elevate his son and Sports Minister, Udhayanidhi as his deputy but indicated the time is yet to come.

Speaking to reporters Stalin, when asked about demands gaining strength from a cross-section within the party to make Udhayanidhi the deputy Chief Minister and whether he would consider it, he said: "The demand has grown stronger; but it has not ripened."

—*PTI*

PRIYANKA ALLEGES GOVT OF GAGGING DIGITIAL MEDIA VIA BROADCAST BILL

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday accused the Modi government of preparing to "gag" digital media, social media, OTT platforms and those who write and speak in private capacity by bringing in the Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, and said the country will not tolerate such actions.

She shared on X two quotes of Mahatma Gandhi and that of Jawaharlal Nehru in which they had stressed the importance of freedom of speech and press.

"These two examples show that our citizens have not got freedom of speech and freedom of the press just like that. Millions of people have fought for it for years," Gandhi said on X. —*PTI*

Opposition had dubbed the directives discriminatory PHOTO: PTI

SC extends stay on tag order on eateries

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Supreme Court on Monday extended its 22 July interim order staying the directives issued by BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh, asking eateries along the Kanwar Yatra routes to display the names of their owners, staff and other details.

The Opposition had dubbed the directives issued by the three states as divisive and discriminatory against Muslims, and the apex court's order effectively ensured that the Yatra was held without their orders being enforced.

The counsel appearing for one of the parties submitted that Kanwar Yatra is currently going on and Shravan will end on 19 August. When he requested the court for an early hearing, the bench said a date will be fixed, without specifying when will the matter be heard next.

—*PTI*

AAP goes solo in Mumbai polls; to fight in 36 seats

MUMBAI, 5 AUG

Aam Aadmi Party will contest the Maharashtra Assembly polls and field candidates on all 36 seats in Mumbai, its leader Preeti Sharma Menon said on Monday.

She also said Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP was part of the Opposition INDI alliance, adding "the alliance was for the Lok Sabha polls and will continue to be together at the national level". BJP is an anti-Maharashtra party, while Eknath Shinde government has no time for public welfare she alleged. —*PTI*

Delhi HC grants liberty to Kejri to move trial court for bail

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

The Delhi High Court on Monday granted liberty to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to approach a trial court with his plea seeking bail in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) corruption case stemming from the alleged excise policy scam, noting the change in circumstances of the case.

The High Court noted that when Kejriwal had filed the bail plea before it, the charge sheet was not filed in the trial court in the case.

However, now the CBI has filed its charge sheet before the special Judge and it would be in the benefit of the AAP leader to first approach the trial court for his bail, the court said.

PHOTO: PTI

In a separate judgment, the High Court also dismissed Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest by the CBI in the case. The High Court had on 17 July reserved its order on his plea challenging his arrest by the CBI.

The Chief Minister, who was arrested by the ED on 21 March, was granted bail by the trial court in the money laundering case on 20 June. However, the trial court's order was stayed by the High Court.

On July 12, the Supreme Court granted him interim bail in the money laundering case.

—*PTI*

ART 370 ABROGATION'S ANNIVERSARY

Congress, PDP protest; term it 'black day'

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, 5 AUG

Protests by Congress and PDP in Jammu and celebrations by BJP in Srinagar marked the fifth anniversary of the reading down of Article 370 of the Constitution that provided special status to Jammu and Kashmir even as former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti and several other regional party leaders claimed that they were put under house arrest.

Congress and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) observed the fifth anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370 as a 'black day' by holding separate protest rallies in Jammu to demand the restoration of statehood and special status for Jammu and Kashmir.

PDP and Congress held seperate protests demanding restoration PHOTO: PTI

Chanting slogans against BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and in favour of statehood restoration, the protestors sat on a dharna after being stopped by police from proceeding further.

PDP also held a protest rally in Gandhinagar in Jammu. In Srinagar, BJP leaders celebrated the fifth anniversary by claiming that the Union Territory has been put on a path to peace and development after the revocation of Article 370.

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah said while BJP leaders were allowed to celebrate the day, those who are against the abrogation have been locked up in their homes. —*PTI*

New world record of playing damru set in MP's Ujjain

BHOPAL, 5 AUG

A new Guinness World Record was created in Madhya Pradesh on Monday under the 'largest damru ensemble' category as nearly 1,500 persons played the small power drums on the Mahakaleshwar temple campus in Ujjain, officials said. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav congratulated the people for setting the new world record. Around 1,500 persons played the damru together on the campus of the temple, one of the 12 jyotirlingas in the country, in an event organised by Shree Mahakaleshwar Temple Management Committee and the MP government's Culture Department. Earlier, the record of the largest damaru ensemble consisting of 488 persons was achieved by the Federation of Indian Associations in New York in August 2022, which has now been broken, he said. People from other districts in addition to Ujjain also participated in this record-breaking event, he said. *—PTI*

Ch'garh DyCM's nephew drowns in waterfall

KAWARDHA, 5 AUG

The 21-year-old nephew of Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao drowned in a waterfall in Kabirdham district, police said on Monday. Tushar Sahu, an office-bearer of the BJP's youth wing, drowned in Rani Dahra waterfall, a tourist spot under Bodla police station limits, during an outing with five of his friends around 4pm on Sunday, Kabirdham Additional Superintendent of Police Vikas Kumar said. A police team was rushed to the spot, and a search was launched to trace Sahu. However, the rescue exercise was called off in the evening as it became dark, he said. Around 6.30 am on Monday, divers found the body stuck under a rock in the waters and fished it out, the official said. Prima facie, it appears that the death was due to drowning, and further investigation is on after registering a case. *—PTI*

Ayodhya rape survivor shifted to Lucknow hospital

AYODHYA, 5 AUG

The 12-year-old Ayodhya gangrape survivor was admitted in Lucknow's Queen Mary Hospital after being referred to the King George's Medical University for better treatment, an official said on Monday. She was referred to King George's Medical University as the women's hospital in Ayodhya did not have the facility to provide adequate treatment, the district's Chief Medical Officer Sanjay Jain said. BJP leaders, including Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, have alleged that the prime accused in the gangrape case, Moid Khan, was a member of the Samajwadi Party and part of Faizabad MP Awadhesh Prasad's team. Police on 30 July arrested Moid Khan, who ran a bakery in the district's Bhadarsa Nagar, and his employee Raju Khan, in connection with the minor's gangrape. The duo raped the girl two months ago and also recorded the act. The incident came to light after the girl was found to be pregnant during a medical checkup, they said. *—PTI*

Para-athlete accuses official of sexual assault

PORT BLAIR, 5 AUG

An FIR has been lodged against a sports department official in Andaman and Nicobar Islands for allegedly molesting a gold medalist para-athlete, police said on Monday. The alleged incident took place in March this year but the woman, who won three gold medals in the national para-athletics championship in 2021, said she did not report the matter to the police earlier fearing her career as a shot put and discus thrower would be affected. However, recently she decided to report the matter to the police and based on her complaint, an FIR was lodged at Aberdeen police station, South Andaman Superintendent of Police Niharika Bhatt told *—PTI*

Coaching centres now death chambers: SC

SC notice to Centre, Delhi over drowning deaths

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

On 27 July, three civil services aspirants drowned in the basement library of Rau's IAS Study Circle in New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

Coaching centres have become "death chambers" and are playing with the lives of students, the Supreme Court said on Monday as it issued notices to the Centre and the Delhi government on three IAS aspirants drowning in the basement of an institute here.

Taking suo motu cognisance of the matter, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan said the incident was an eye-opener for all.

On 27 July, three civil services aspirants drowned in the basement library of Rau's IAS Study Circle in the Old Rajinder Nagar area here after it was flooded following heavy rain.

Seven people, including Rau's IAS Study Circle CEO Abhishek Gupta and coordinator Deshpal Singh, have been arrested in the case.

"These places (coaching centres) have become death chambers. Coaching centres are playing with the lives of these aspirants who have come from different parts of the country with dreams and are working hard," the bench said.

The top court took cognisance of the matter while hearing a petition filed by an association of coaching centres challenging a December 2023 Delhi High Court order which had directed the city's fire services and the civic body to inspect all coaching centres here to ascertain if they are complying with the fire safety norms.

Terming the plea frivolous, the apex court dismissed the appeal while imposing a cost of Rs 1 lakh on the association and said no coaching centre should be allowed to operate unless there is compliance with fire safety norms and other requirements. *—PTI*

SC to hear pleas on marital rape next week

The Supreme Court will next week hear pleas on the intensely discussed legal question of whether a husband should enjoy immunity from prosecution for the offence of rape if he forces his wife, who is not a minor, to have sex. A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra on Monday took note of the submissions. *—PTI*

Allahabad High Court *PHOTO: PTI*

SC TO HEAR ON HC SCRAPPING OF MADARSA EDU ACT

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

The Supreme Court on Monday said it will list for final hearing the pleas challenging the Allahabad High Court order that had scrapped the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004, calling it "unconstitutional" and violative of the constitutional principle of secularism.

The top court had on 5 April stayed the high court judgement, saying the issues raised in seven petitions against the verdict merited "closer reflection". A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said it will list the pleas for final disposal on 13 August.

It also appointed lawyer Ruchira Goel as nodal counsel for ensuring filing of common compilation of documents in electronic form. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for one of the petitioners, said a contempt petition against the state government has also been filed. *—PTI*

SC seeks data on status of castes included in OBC list

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Supreme Court on Monday asked West Bengal government to provide quantifiable data on social and economic backwardness and the inadequate representation in public sector jobs of the castes that were included by it in the OBC list for granting quota benefits.

The top court issued notices to the private litigants who had moved Calcutta High Court against the inclusion of 77 castes, mostly Muslims, in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) list.

High Court on 22 May struck down the OBC status of several classes in West Bengal granted since 2010, finding such reservations to vacancies in services in the state illegal. *—PTI*

SC raps UP over delay in hearing of remission pleas

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

The Supreme Court on Monday rapped the Uttar Pradesh government for not complying with its order to consider remission pleas within the time frame specified by it and directed the principal secretary of the state's prisons department to appear before it on 19 August.

"We want to correct the system," a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih said while hearing a convict's plea seeking remission in accordance with the applicable policy of the state. The apex court directed the prisons department principal secretary to appear before it through video conference. The court took strong exception when the counsel for the state government again sought time when the matter came up today for hearing.

"Four months have passed. Again you are asking for two more months to decide the plea. Nothing has been done. As far as state of UP is considered, we have seen that the orders passed by this court for considering remission plea of accused persons in a specific time is not being considered." *—PTI*

Preliminary investigation suggested that the victims did not take the dedicated route fixed for the Kanwariyas *PHOTO: PTI*

9 Kanwariyas electrocuted as wire falls on bus in Bihar

HAJIPUR, 5 AUG

At least nine Kanwar Yatra pilgrims were electrocuted to death and two others sustained injuries when the vehicle they were travelling in came in contact with a high-tension overhead wire in Bihar's Vaishali district, a senior official said on Monday. The incident took place in Sultanpur village in Industrial police station area around 11.15pm on Sunday.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed grief over the deaths. A statement issued by the chief minister's office (CMO) said, "CM has expressed grief over the death of nine Kanwariyas. CM has said that ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh each has been provided to the next of the kin of the deceased by the authorities concerned."

"They were going to Baba Harihar Nath Temple in Sonepur to perform Jalabhishek," Vaishali District Magistrate Yashpal Meena told PTI.

"Preliminary investigation suggested that the victims did not take the dedicated route fixed for the Kanwariyas." he said. *—PTI*

Strange coincidence: HC on Delhi shelter home deaths

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Delhi High Court on Monday remarked that the recent deaths of 14 inmates in the city government-run Asha Kiran shelter home for the mentally challenged was a "strange coincidence" and directed the social welfare secretary to visit the premises on August 6 and file a report.

Noting that "nearly all" the deceased suffered from tuberculosis, a bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan directed the Delhi Jal Board to test the quality of water as well as the condition of water and sewer pipelines and file a report. *—PTI*

MONSOON FURY

Pune drowns as rain pounds M'rashtra

Red alert sounded for Pimpri-Chinchwad and low-lying areas; power supply cut due to heavy rains *PHOTO: PTI*

PUNE, 5 AUG

Strong monsoon conditions continue to hover across the country, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing an 'orange' alert for heavy to very heavy rainfall in Maharashtra's Pune and Satara districts on Monday.

Pune has been experiencing persistent heavy rain for the past few days.

In response to incessant rainfall in Pune and the release of excess water from the Khadakwasla Dam, the Indian Army carried out relief work in the Ekta Nagar area on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Monday inspected the flood-hit areas of Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad and listened to grievances of people.

He toured areas like Sangavi in Pimpri Chinchwad as well as Patil Estate in Shivajinagar and Ekta Nagar in Sinhgad Road area in Pune.

Speaking to citizens in Shivajinagar, Shinde said, "The administration is providing all temporary measures to the people affected by flooding but the government is also committed to chalking out a new policy and will provide long term solutions."

The weather department also predicted heavy rainfall at isolated places in ghat areas. Light to moderate rainfall in the plains for 6 August, while moderate rainfall for 7

PHOTO: ANI

Rivers in spate, 1,000 evacuated amid Gujarat rains

AHMEDABAD, 5 AUG

Heavy rains battered Navsari and Valsad districts in south Gujarat, sending rivers in spate and prompting the evacuation of more than 1,000 people from water-logged low-lying areas on Monday.

Khergam taluka in Navsari district received 229 mm of rainfall in 24 hours up to 6am on Monday while 12 talukas in Dangs and Tapi districts in South Gujarat received more than 100 mm of rainfall during this period, State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) data showed.

Aurang River in Valsad taluka crossed the danger mark amid incessant rainfall in the upstream areas. Flood waters of the Kaveri and Ambika rivers in neighbouring Navsari district inundated low-lying areas.

Approximately 1,000 people were shifted to safety in Gandevi taluka in Navsari district after heavy rainfall triggered a flood in Ambika and Kaveri rivers on Sunday.

Seven labourers stranded in a flooded pond were rescued by National Disaster Response Force personnel on Sunday . *—PTI*

2,500 moved to relief camps in Wayanad

WAYANAD, 5 AUG

Over 2,500 people, including 599 children and six pregnant women, whose lives have been shattered by deadly landslides, are staying in various relief camps in Kerala's Wayanad, according to authorities on Monday.

As per the latest official figures released by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), a total of 16 rescue camps are there in Meppadi and other village panchayats in the hill district where the landslide-hit people are staying.

As many as 2,514 people belonging to 723 families are in the camps. Among them, 943 are male, 972 are female, and 599 are children, the CMO said.

As per the government figures till Sunday evening, a total of 221 bodies and 166 body parts of the landslide victims had been recovered so far.

The number of missing people had gone down to 180 from the earlier 206. Local lad Prajeesh drove his jeep up through the treacherous hill path twice and returned with many hapless people who were stranded atop after the deadly landslides hit Wayanad's high-range Mundakkai last week.

> **Kerala government allowed "illegal human habitat expansion and mining" in the state's fragile region which resulted in the devastating landslides in Wayanad district. The consultation with the states on the notification of eco-sensitive zone in the Western Ghats should be finalised soon**
>
> -Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav

Just before he could move to safety came a phone call for a third 'mission,' but the ever popular localite is now missing, his damaged jeep seen at Chooralmala, leading to both fears of the worst and hopes for good news. *—PTI*

'Ladki Bahin Yojana' a beneficiary scheme not discriminatory: HC

MUMBAI, 5 AUG

Women tie rakhi to Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde after the launch of the 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin' scheme in Mumbai *PHOTO: ANI*

The Bombay High Court on Monday said the Maharashtra government's 'Ladki Bahin Yojana' is a beneficiary scheme for women and cannot be said to be discriminatory.

A division bench of Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya and Justice Amit Borkar dismissed a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by city-based Chartered Accountant Naveed Abdul Saeed Mulla, seeking to quash the scheme.

The bench said in what manner the government has to frame a scheme is out of the "judicial purview".

"It is a policy decision, so we cannot interfere unless there is violation of any fundamental rights," the court said.

The bench dismissed the PIL but said it was not imposing any cost on the petitioner.

Under the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, which was announced in the state budget, Rs 1,500 is slated to be transferred into the bank accounts of eligible women in the age group of 21 to 65 years whose family income was less than Rs 2.5 lakh.

The PIL claimed the scheme was politically motivated and was actually a "freebie", introduced by the government to "bribe voters".

The petitioner's advocate, Owais Pechkar, argued that taxpayers' money should not be used for such schemes.

The HC bench, however, questioned if the court could fix the priorities of schemes for the government.

The petitioner has to differentiate between a freebie and a social welfare scheme, it said.

"Can we (court) fix priorities of the government? Do not invite us into the political thicket...although it may be tempting for us," CJ Upadhyaya said. *—PTI*

JUNKS PLEA

HC refuses to stay demolition of Bhaker's coach's house in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

The Delhi High Court on Monday refused to stay the demolition of the house of national pistol shooting coach Samaresh Jung in the Civil Lines here, saying in the absence of any legal right over the property which was subleased to Jung's family, no relief can be granted.

Justice Sanjeev Narula dismissed the petition filed by Sameer Jung, the brother of the coach, challenging a 1 March, 2024 notice which declared all occupants (approximately 1,000) spread over 32 acres in the Khyber Pass market area as unauthorised and initiated a blanket demolition drive.

Samaresh Jung, who coached Olympic medal winner Manu Bhaker, also resides in the same property in which the family was legally inducted as sub-tenant about 60-70 years back, the lawyer told the court, adding that they were not given any opportunity of hearing by the authorities.

PHOTO: PTI

The counsel for the Land and Development Office (L&DO) submitted that the coach must have done some great service to the country but ultimately it is public land and no exception can be made.

The petition, filed through advocates Rohit Yadav, Sahil Siddiqui and Gultash Guron, sought quashing of the March 1 notice and urged the court to direct the authorities not to evict the petitioner and his family from the property in Bhutta Singh Building in Khyber Pass.

- It said the petitioner's grandparents were the original sub-tenants of the property in the early 1940s and his grandfather, was a freedom fighter and a war hero

It said the petitioner's grandparents were the original sub-tenants of the property in the early 1940s and his grandfather, Colonel Sher Jung was a freedom fighter and a war hero.

It added that although the petitioner's counsel has argued that the petitioner was paying property tax, this would not give them any right over the property. *—PTI*

THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

A temple dedicated to an 'Alien God' has been constructed in Tamil Nadu's Salem. The brainchild of a man known only as 'Siddar', this is reportedly the first of its kind in India. Housed within the premises of the revered Kailaya Shiva Temple, the underground sanctuary houses a black statue of the purported extraterrestrial deity. Siddar claims to have established contact with aliens and received their blessing for the construction of this extraordinary place of worship and claims that only aliens can save the Earth

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Sheikh Hasina: From record 4th term to dramatic ouster

Sheikh Hasina, who was elected for a record fourth consecutive term and fifth overall term this year, was always admired by her supporters as an "Iron Lady" before the dramatic development that abruptly ended her 15-year-rule in Bangladesh.

Hasina, who provided stability to the once military-ruled Bangladesh but at the same time criticised as an "autocratic" leader by opponents, was among the world's longest-serving female heads of government.

The 76-year-old daughter of Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been ruling the strategically located South Asian nation since 2009. She was elected for a record fourth consecutive term in January in an election boycotted by the main opposition party Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of former premier Khaleda Zia and its allies. Born in erstwhile East Pakistan (now in Bangladesh) in September 1947, Hasina became active in politics while studying at the University of Dhaka in the late 1960s. She served as her father's political liaison during his imprisonment by the Pakistani government.

After Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan in 1971, her father Mujibur Rahman became the president and then prime minister of the country. However, in August 1975, Rahman, his wife and their three sons were assassinated in their home by military officers. Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana survived the purge as they were abroad. Hasina, who spent six years in exile in India, was elected as the leader of the Awami League, a party founded by her father. In 1981, Hasina returned home and became vocal about democracy in the country ruled by the military, which placed her under house arrest on multiple occasions.

In the 1991 general elections, the Hasina-led Awami League failed to secure a majority. Her rival Khaleda Zia of the BNP became prime minister.

Five years later, Hasina was elected Prime Minister in the 1996 general elections.

76-year-old Sheikh Hasina is the daughter of Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been ruling the strategically located South Asian nation since 2009 ***PHOTO: ANI***

Hasina was voted out of office in the 2001 elections but returned to power with a thumping victory in 2008 polls. Khaleda Zia-led BNP has been left in the lurch since then.

Hasina escaped an assassination bid in 2004 when a grenade exploded at her rally.

Soon after coming to power in 2009, Hasina set up a tribunal to try 1971 war crimes cases. The tribunal convicted some high-profile members of the opposition, sparking violent protests. Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamist party and a key ally of BNP, was banned from participating in elections in 2013. BNP chief Khaleda Zia was sentenced to 17 years in prison on corruption charges.

The BNP boycotted the 2014 elections but joined the one in 2018, which party leaders later said was a mistake, alleging that the voting was marred with widespread rigging and intimidation.b In the 2024 elections, the BNP and its allies boycotted the votes, demanding polls under a non-party caretaker government. They alleged that Hasina cannot deliver credible voting. The polls were fought by 27 political parties, including the parliamentary opposition Jatiya Party. The rest were members of the ruling Awami League-led coalition, which experts dubbed as the "satellite parties." The BNP's boycott, however, raised questions about the credibility of the polls, which registered a low turnout. Six months after the elections, a massive protest erupted against her government over a controversial quota system that reserved 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's War of Independence in 1971. Over 300 protesters were killed in violence during the protests that led to her dramatic ouster. Hasina presided over one of the world's fastest-growing economies and improved living standards in the South Asian nation in the past 15 years. The NEWSNEXTBD.com dubbed her the "Iron Lady" several years back and since then it was used by the Western media to refer to her.

Her supporters credit Hasina with humming development projects and providing stability in the country, which has witnessed military rule for years. Hasina won praise for the handling of the world's biggest refugee crisis as over a million Rohingyas have taken shelter in Bangladesh after fleeing for their lives in neighbouring Myanmar to evade persecution after a 2017 army crackdown at their homeland.

Hasina is also credited for skilfully negotiating the rival interests of India and China as Bangladesh is virtually sandwiched between the two Asian giants. She got the support of both the big neighbours and Russia ahead of the elections.

Bangladesh's per capita income tripled since Hasina took power in January 2009 while its gross domestic product (GDP) clocked at a growth rate of 7.28 per cent last year.

Political opponents described Hasina's government an "autocratic" and corrupt regime, while many civil society figures and rights groups accused it of rights abuses. The 2022 US human rights report highlighted widespread abuses, yet security forces enjoyed impunity. Corruption has been the other major issue. Hasina is the mother of a mental health expert daughter and an ICT specialist son, who is also her ICT affairs adviser. Her husband was a nuclear scientist who died in 2009. *—PTI*

LETTERS

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SALAR ساہر

El Nino of 1904 helped spread cholera in India

An El Nino event may have helped create the environment conducive for spread of cholera by driving climate extremes such as unusual temperatures and rainfall, according to a new study that analysed strains circulating during the early 20th-century pandemic in India.

Researchers found that the environment could have helped in creating and spreading a new strain of the bacterium Vibrio cholerae, first discovered in 1884 by German microbiologist Robert Koch, that caused the water-borne disease affecting the small intestine.

The role of environment in spreading cholera has been debated for the last two centuries, according to the team of researchers, including those at the Barcelona Institute for Global Health, Spain.

The cholera pandemic during 1899-1923 was the sixth since the first in 1817, and documented to have been especially lethal in India, Arabia and northern Africa. In 1900, an unprecedented 700,000 deaths were reported from provinces across India, which was then under the British rule.

In this study, published in the journal PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases, the researchers analysed historical data of prevailing climate conditions and cholera deaths across various regions in India.

Their analysis revealed that the patterns in cholera deaths coincided with the unusual seasonal temperatures and rainfall driven by the El Nino event of 1904-1907.

The researchers correlated the timing of these unusual weather events with the development of a new invasive strain, suggested by a "very steep rise in the case fatality (that) was apparent from the harbour population in the capital Calcutta."

Cholera is an infection caused by ingestion of contaminated food or water with the bacterium Vibrio cholerae ***PHOTO: ANI***

- The role of environment in spreading cholera has been debated for the last two centuries, according to the team of researchers

Additionally, the team also analysed past climate conditions and cholera data for the ongoing 'El Tor' pandemic, which began in 1961.

The authors found that the climate conditions in the past bear similarities to strong El Nino events that have been linked with cholera strain changes -- new strains replacing predominant ones -- during the ongoing seventh pandemic. Each year, there are about 13-40 lakh cases and 21,000 to 1.4 lakh deaths around the world due to the bacterial disease, according to the World Health Organization.

"Our results support a role of climate acting as a major driver of the 1904-07 anomalous cholera episode, which would have facilitated the establishment of the novel strain," the authors wrote.

They further examined the possibilities of new cholera strains emerging aided by a warmer climate, using models.

The authors found that climate extremes, driven by global warming, could boost the chances of new strains of cholera to emerge through the end of the current century.

"Increased climate variability and extremes under global warming provide windows of opportunity for emerging pathogens," they wrote. *—PTI*

Symptoms of Cholera includes diarrhea, nausea and vommitting, and dehydration ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

India eye to script another historic chapter in Olympics men's hockey

Ah Having displayed nerves of steel to be within touching distance of a second successive Olympic medal, the Indian hockey team will fancy its chances against familiar foe and reigning world champion Germany in the semifinal of the ongoing Games, hoping to better the bronze that it claimed in the Tokyo edition.

India won last of their eight Olympic gold medals way back in the 1980 Moscow Games. Paris provides them a great opportunity to make history.

A semifinal win will ensure a silver for India, which they last won in the 1960 Rome edition. The Indians displayed a tenacious performance against Britain in the quarterfinal at the iconic Yves-du-Manoir Stadium on Sunday.

Playing with 10 men for close to 40 minutes after Amit Rohidas was shown a red card for unintentionally hitting rival forward Will Calnan on his face, the Harmanpreet Singh-led side defended stoutly to hold Britain 1-1 in regulation time and force a shoot-out, where it emerged 4-2 winner.

Veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, playing his last international tournament, seemed to have saved his best for the last leg of his career as he made save after save, including two in the shoot-out, to seal India's second consecutive Olympic semifinal spot.

It was one of the bravest performances from the Indians as in modern day hockey, to play and win with a man down is a Herculean task.

And come Tuesday, Harmanpreet and his men would not only look to better the colour of their Tokyo medal but would also want to give a befitting farewell gift to the talismanic Sreejesh who will walk into the sunset after the Paris Games.

Nicknamed 'The Great Wall of Indian hockey', Sreejesh has been phenomenal in the Games so far, standing like a warrior in front of the post and enjoying every moment of his last hurrah at the Olympics.

Against Britain, Sreejesh made 10 spectacular saves from field shots. If that was not enough, he kept out 10 penalty corners.

"When I stepped on this field today (Sunday), there were two options for me. This can be my last match, or I got an opportunity for two more matches and I think, yeah, I got two more matches now," Sreejesh said later.

"See, whoever comes in the semis, we (will) just play our game. That's it, that's important, because now it's a different game, because we are one man down and we need to focus on that now."

Indians displayed a tenacious performance against Britain in the quarterfinal at the iconic Yves-du-Manoir Stadium on Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI***

But it won't be easy for the Indians as key defender and first rusher Amit Rohidas has been suspended from the semifinal match after receiving a contentious red card against Britain, a decision which Hockey India has appealed.

Rohidas' absence will also weaken India's options from penalty corners as he has been second to Harmanpreet from set pieces and the entire responsibility will now rest on the skipper.

"Now, these things are not in our control. While it is a setback to not have Amit on the pitch for the semis, we are focused on the task at hand," said Harmanpreet, who has been India's leading scorer at the Games with seven goals.

"On Sunday, what stood out in our performance was the team's ability to take on the added responsibility of a key position that Amit played. Every player stepped up and even until the last minute, we were fighting back."

Going by world ranking and recent head-to-head record, there is hardly anything to differentiate between current world champions and four-time Olympic gold medallists Germany from India.

While Germany are ranked fourth in the world, the Indians are a rung below.

Germany, who beat Argentina 3-2 in the quarterfinal, are familiar opponents for India in high-stakes tournaments, the most famous being the bronze medal match in Tokyo where India registered a thrilling 5-4 win, thanks a stunning last-second save by Sreejesh.

In the days leading up to the Paris Games, India had played Germany in practice matches and the Harmanpreet-led side won five out of those six contests. India's most recent contests against Germany were in the FIH Pro League's London leg in June this year, where they defeated the Honamas 3-0 before losing 2-3 in the return tie. "We wanted to play Germany in the final. At least, that was what we had discussed amongst ourselves during team meetings ahead of the Olympic Games.

"They are challenging opponents and when we play against them, the match usually goes down till the last second," said Harmanpreet.

In the other semifinal, Netherlands will quare off against Spain. *—PTI*

PHOTO: sowetanlive.co.za

South Africa rescues 90 Ethiopians locked in house

JOHANNESBURG, 5 AUG

South African police said they rescued 90 Ethiopian migrants who were being held against their will at a property in Johannesburg. Police carried out a search at the property on Sunday for a person reported to have been kidnapped and discovered the migrants, they said. Two people were arrested on suspicion of kidnapping and human trafficking. The alleged kidnapping victim was also rescued, police said Monday. The Ethiopian migrants are believed to have been illegally trafficked. They were packed into small rooms and kept locked up, police said. They were taken to a hospital for medical care and the two suspects will face charges in court. Authorities, including Interpol, have raised concerns over the trafficking of Ethiopian migrants. *—AP*

Hurricane Debby to bring heavy rains to Florida, Georgia

TAMPA, 5 AUG

The centre of Hurricane Debby is expected to reach the Big Bend coast of Florida early Monday bringing potential record-setting rains, catastrophic flooding and life-threatening storm surge as it moves slowly across the northern part of the state before stalling over the coastal regions of Georgia and South Carolina. Debby was located about 161 kilometres west of Tampa, Florida, with maximum sustained winds of 120 kph. The storm was moving north at 19 kph, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said Sunday evening. Debby is the fourth named storm of the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season after Tropical Storm Alberto, Hurricane Beryl and Tropical Storm Chris, all of which formed in June. *—AP*

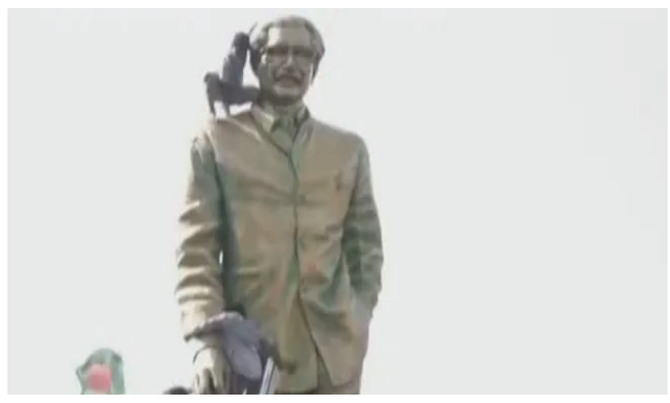
Nobel Prize winner Tsung-Dao Lee dies at age 97

TAIPEI, 5 AUG

Chinese-American physicist Tsung-Dao Lee, who in 1957 became the second-youngest scientist to receive a Nobel Prize, died Sunday at his home in San Francisco at age 97, according to a Chinese university and a research center. Lee, whose work advanced the understanding of particle physics, was one of the great masters in the field, according to a joint obituary released Monday by the Tsung-Dao Lee Institute at Shanghai Jiao Tong University and the Beijing-based China Center for Advanced Science and Technology. Lee, a naturalized US citizen since 1962, was also a professor emeritus at Columbia University in New York. Robert Oppenheimer, known as the father of the atomic bomb, once praised Lee as one of the most brilliant theoretical physicists of the time, whose work showed "remarkable freshness, versatility and style." *—AP*

Anti-govt protests break out across B'desh

Protesters vandalise Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's statue



Black smoke rises from the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) during clashes between protesters and Awami League members, in Dhaka, Bangladesh; Watch: Protesters vandalise Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's statue ***PHOTOS: PTI***

DHAKA, 5 AUG

What began as peaceful protests by students in Bangladesh against a quota system for government jobs has turned into an unprecedented challenge and rebellion against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her ruling Awami League party.

Anti-government protesters across the country said they will march to the capital, Dhaka, on Monday following a weekend of violence left dozens of people dead as the military imposed a curfew for an indefinite period and authorities cut off internet access in an attempt to stem the unrest.

They are demanding that Hasina resign and are seeking justice for the scores of people killed. Since the violence began in July, at least 300 people have died, according to local media reports.

Why are they protesting?

At first, the demonstrations were against a quota system that set aside up to 30 per cent of government jobs for family members of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence against Pakistan.

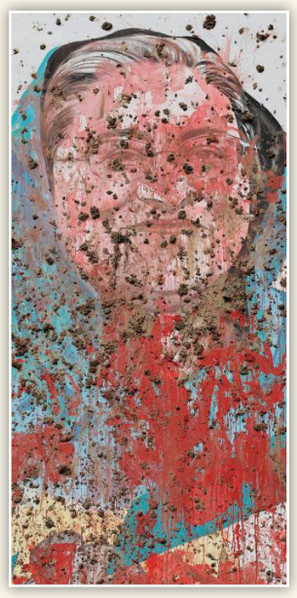
Protesters said the system was discriminatory and benefited supporters of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League party, which led the independence movement.

A march has been started from Jahangirnagar University (JU) towards Dhaka with a one-point demand for the fall of the government. The march started from the foot of Shaheed Minar of the university at around 12 noon on Monday.

Around 5,000 people from neighboring Savar and Ashulia areas along with thousands of teachers and students of the university joined the march.

—PTI/ Dhaka Tribune

WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR?



A mural of former Bangladeshi PM Sheikh Hasina is seen vandalised by protester ***PHOTO: AP***

The protests, which have drawn hundreds of thousands, began in July with students demonstrating against a controversial quota system that allocated government jobs. It turned violent on 16 July as student protesters clashed with security officials and pro-government activists, prompting authorities to disperse tear gas, fire rubber bullets and impose a curfew with a shoot-on-sight order. The internet and mobile data were also turned off. Schools and universities, which closed their doors last month, remain shut.

Two F-16 jets, sporting Ukraine's trident insignia on their tails ***PHOTO: PTI***

Zelenskyy flaunts US' F-16 fighter jets

SOMEWHERE IN UKRAINE, 5 AUG

Ukraine's newly arrived F-16 fighter jets were put on display Sunday by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who said the planes will boost the country's war effort against Russia.

"These jets are in our sky and today you see them," said Zelenskyy, standing in front of two of the fighter jets as two others flew overhead in close formation. "It's good that they are here and that we can put them to use." Ukraine is also trying to get neighbouring countries to help defend it against Russian missiles, Zelenskyy said.

"This decision is probably a difficult one for our partners, as they are always afraid of unnecessary escalation," said Ukraine's president. "We will work on this...I think we have a good option of a NATO-Ukraine council...so that NATO countries could talk to Ukraine about the possibility of a small coalition of neighbouring countries that would shoot down enemy missiles."

Two F-16 jets, sporting Ukraine's trident insignia on their tails and draped in camouflage netting, were a dramatic background for Zelenskyy's address to Air Forces Day, an event held under tight security at an undisclosed location to protect the fighter jets from Russian attacks. *—AP*

Mali cuts diplomatic ties with Ukraine over Wagner controversy

BAMAKO, 5 AUG

Mali has announced it is severing diplomatic ties with Ukraine, accusing a senior official of having admitted Kyiv's role in a heavy defeat in July that killed dozens of mercenaries from Russia's Wagner group as well as Malian soldiers. The northern Tuareg rebels say they killed at least 84 mercenaries and 47 Malian soldiers over three days of fighting late last month in the north of the West African country, in what appeared to be Wagner's heaviest defeat since it stepped into the conflict two years ago. On 29 July, Andriy Yusov, the spokesperson for Ukraine's military intelligence agency, told that the Malian rebels had received "all the information they needed, which allowed to carry out their operation against Russians. *—Al Jazeera*

Hezbollah launches drone attack on Northern Israel

JERUSALEM, 5 AUG

The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah has hit northern Israel in a drone attack in response to what it called "attacks and assassinations" carried out by Israel in several villages in south Lebanon. The Israeli military says the attack wounded two soldiers and set off a fire.

The violence came amid fears of an all-out war after the killing of a senior Hezbollah commander in Lebanon and Hamas' political leader in Iran. The Hezbollah attack appears more in keeping with ongoing border skirmishes, rather than as a direct response to the political assassinations.

However, in respond to that, the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah said it launched a drone attack early Monday on northern Israel that the Israeli military said wounded two Israeli troops and set off a fire.

The violence came as fears of an all-out regional war mount following the killings last week of a senior Hezbollah commander in Lebanon and Hamas' top political leader in Iran. The Iranian-backed Hezbollah said in a statement it targeted a military base in northern Israel in response to "attacks and assassinations" carried out by Israel in several villages in south Lebanon.

The attack did not appear to be part of a more intense retaliation expected in response to the killing of Hezbollah commander Fouad Shukur in Beirut last week. The Israeli military said fire services were working to put out a fire that was ignited as a result of the attack in Ayelet HaShahar in the upper Galilee.

—The Guardian/AP

Smoke rises after a strike in an area in Lebanon next to the Israeli-Lebanese border at the Galilee region, as seen from the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights, on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

HOUTHIS HIT CONTAINER SHIP IN GULF OF ADEN

DUBAI, 5 AUG

A missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck a Liberian-flagged container ship travelling through the Gulf of Aden, authorities said Sunday, the first assault by the group since Israeli airstrikes targeted them. The Houthis offered no explanation for the two-week pause in their attacks on shipping through the Red Sea corridor, which have seen similar slowdowns since the assaults began in November over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. But the resumption comes after the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran, the Houthis' main benefactor, amid renewed concerns over the war breaking out into a regional conflict. The rebels separately said they shot down another US spy drone Sunday, later publishing imagery of the aircraft's wreckage on the side of the mountain. The attack on Saturday happened some 225 kilometres (140 miles) southeast of Aden in a stretch of the Gulf of Aden that has seen numerous Houthi attacks previously. It hit the container ship Groton just above its waterline, causing minor damage, said the Joint Maritime Information Centre, a multinational coalition overseen by the US Navy. An earlier missile attack missed the vessel, the JMIC said. *—AP*

Starmer calls for meeting over 'far-right thuggery'

LONDON, 5 AUG

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has called an emergency COBRA meeting of senior ministers and police chiefs at 10 Downing Street here on Monday after a weekend of riots across several cities in the country, which he termed a "far-right thuggery" that will face the full force of the law.

Hundreds of arrests have been made as police officers in riot gear responded to violent scenes in Rotherham, Middlesbrough, Bolton and other parts of the UK on Sunday, after days of some of the worst rioting seen on the streets of the country in the wake of the fatal stabbings of three schoolgirls in Southport, north-west England.

Keir Starmer ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

- Hotels housing asylum seekers and mosques have been among the targets of the anti-immigrant mobs after initial false claims spread online regarding the stabbing suspect being an immigrant who arrived illegally

Hotels housing asylum seekers and mosques have been among the targets of the anti-immigrant mobs after initial false claims spread online regarding the stabbing suspect being an immigrant who arrived in the country illegally.

"I utterly condemn the far-right thuggery we have seen this weekend. Be in no doubt: those who have participated in this violence will face the full force of the law," said Starmer in a statement on Sunday.

He will chair the emergency Cabinet Office Briefing Room A (COBRA) meeting with UK Home Secretary Yvette Cooper to discuss the future course of action to curb the violence. The Home Office has also announced that mosques will be offered greater protection with new "emergency security" that can be rapidly deployed to respond to violent disorder targeting places of worship. *—PTI*

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

Aus ups terrorism threat level from 'possible' to 'probable'

MELBOURNE, 5 AUG

The Australian government on Monday elevated the nation's terrorism threat alert level from "possible" to "probable," citing concerns about increasing radicalisation among young people and community tensions over the Israel-Hamas war.

It is the first time the threat level has been elevated to the midpoint of the five-tier National Terrorism Threat Advisory System since November 2022. The level had been "probable" the previous eight years.

But Prime Minister Anthony Albanese added that while government officials think the current climate makes terrorism an increased danger, they didn't know of any specific threats. "I want to reassure Australians probable does not mean inevitable, and it does not mean there is intelligence about an imminent threat or danger," Albanese told reporters.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and ASIO director-general Mike Burgess speak about the country's terrorism threat alert level during a news conference at Parliament House in Australia on Monday ***PHOTO: AP***

He said the government was acting on the advice of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, the nation's main domestic spy agency known as ASIO. "The advice that we've received is that more Australians are embracing a more diverse range of extreme ideologies and it is our responsibility to be vigilant," Albanese said.

Australian authorities last declared a terrorist act in April — a classification that that allows greater resourcing of a law enforcement response

- It is the first time the threat level has been elevated to the midpoint of the five-tier National Terrorism Threat Advisory System since November 2022

— when a 16-year-old boy was accused in the stabbing of a Sydney bishop while a church service was being livestreamed. ASIO director-general Mike Burgess said more Australians are being radicalised more quickly. "More Australians are embracing a more diverse range of extreme ideologies and more Australians are willing to use violence to advance their cause," Burgess said. *—AP*

'US relation is important, but can't compromise on China'

LAHORE, 5 AUG

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that Pakistan wants to repair ties with the US but not at the cost of its ties with China as no other country could do what Beijing was doing for his cash-strapped country.

The 72-year-old Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader made these remarks during a meeting with a group of journalists who had recently returned from an official visit to China at his Model Town residence here, according to the Dawn newspaper.

Sharif said that work was progressing fast in the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and also informed that during the recent visit of Chinese experts to Pakistan, there was positive movement in the promotion of cooperation in different fields.

Shehbaz Sharif ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

Asked about the Pakistan-US relations, the prime minister said that the country needed to repair its relations with Washington as that was in its best interests but it shouldn't be at the expense of China.

"I think our relations with the US must be repaired, as it is very necessary for Pakistan...But it shouldn't be at the cost of China... and I had told (the Americans) recently in the presence of various dignitaries, including Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar," Sharif was quoted as saying. *—PTI*

Investors become poorer by ₹15.32L cr as market crash

BSE plummeted 2,222.55 points to settle at 78,759.40

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Stock market investors lost a whopping Rs 15.32 lakh crore on Monday following a crash in Indian equities triggered by a sharp plunge in Japanese and other global markets.

The 30-share BSE benchmark plummeted 2,222.55 points or 2.74 per cent to settle at over a month's low of 78,759.40, marking its worst single-day retreat since June 4, 2024. During the day, it tanked 2,686.09 points or 3.31 per cent to 78,295.86.

Following the sharp decline in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms dropped by Rs 15,32,796.1 crore to Rs 4,41,84,150.03 crore (USD 5.27 trillion).

Japan's benchmark stock index plunged 12.4 per cent on Monday, compounding a global market rout set off by investor concerns that the US economy could be headed for recession.

Market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms dropped by Rs 9,51,771.37 crore to Rs 4,47,65,174.76 crore PHOTO: PTI

Indian equity markets are witnessing signs of the first meaningful correction in global markets after an extended bull run, he added.

From the Sensex pack, Tata Motors slumped over 7 per cent. Adani Ports, Tata Steel, SBI, Power Grid, Maruti and JSW Steel were the other big laggards.

- From the Sensex pack, Tata Motors, Maruti, Tata Steel, Infosys, Tech Mahindra and JSW Steel were the biggest laggards. On the contrary, Hindustan Unilever, Sun Pharma and Nestle were trading in the positive territory

However, Hindustan Unilever and Nestle ended in positive territory.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,310 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. A total of 3,414 stocks declined while 664 advanced and 111 remained unchanged on the BSE. —*PTI*

RUPEE TUMBLES 31P TO CLOSE AT ALL-TIME LOW

MUMBAI, 5 AUG

The rupee slumped 31 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.03 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, following a sell-off in broader global markets amid rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and worries over recession in the US.

Forex traders said the downfall in the domestic unit came on the heels of a sharp downturn in the Indian equity markets and significant foreign fund outflows.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.78 and touched an intra-day high of 83.76 and a low of 84.03 against the dollar during the session.

It finally settled at its fresh record low level of 84.03 (provisional) against the American currency, down 31 paise against its previous close.

On Friday, the rupee settled 1 paisa higher at 83.72 against the US dollar in a range-bound trade. —*PTI*

COAL HIGHEST CONTRIBUTER

Govt: Assets worth ₹3.86L cr monetised in 3 yrs

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

The government on Monday said assets worth Rs 3.86 lakh crore have been monetised in three years to 2023-24, with a major chunk coming from the coal sector.

"During the period 2021-22 to 2023-24, transactions with aggregate monetisation value of Rs 3.86 lakh crore in terms of accruals or private investment were completed," Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

He also gave sector-wise details of the funds mobilised during the three-year period.

Asset monetisation worth over Rs 1.54 lakh crore happened in the coal sector, followed by roads (Rs 81,556 crore), power (Rs 33,512 crore),

PHOTO: PTI

mines (Rs 32,651 crore), petroleum and natural gas (Rs 28,587 crore) and railways (Rs 20,417 crore).

Further, assets worth Rs 12,979 crore were monetised in the shipping sector, Rs 9,800 crore in the urban sector, Rs 8,033 crore in warehousing, Rs 2,663 crore in civil aviation and Rs 1,452 crore in telecom. —*PTI*

Gold rises ₹250 to per 10g; silver tumbles ₹1,300

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Gold prices rose by Rs 250 to Rs 72,800 per 10 grams in the local market here on Monday amid increased demand from jewellers. The precious metal settled lower at Rs 72,550 per 10 grams in the previous session on Saturday. Extending its losses for the third straight day, silver prices tumbled by Rs 1,300 to Rs 84,200 per kg on decreased offtake by coin makers and industrial units, according to the All India Sarafa Association. It had ended at Rs 85,500 per kg in the previous session. In addition, gold of 99.5 per cent purity increased by Rs 250 to Rs 72,450 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 72,200 per 10 grams. —*PTI*

PFC pitches to buy projects from Tata in Odisha

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Tata Power on Monday said it has received a letter of intent from PFC Consulting to acquire a project-specific special purpose vehicle. PFC Consulting is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Power Finance Corporation. In an exchange filing, Tata Power said it "has received a Letter of Intent (LoI) from PFC Consulting to acquire Paradeep Transmission Ltd, a project special purpose vehicle (SPV)." The SPV would be developed on build, own, operate and transfer basis, to provide transmission service for 35 years from the schedule date of commercial operation, it said. The date of commercial operation is effective 24 months from the date of SPV acquisition, Tata Power said. The scope of project involves constructing 2 x 1,500 MVA (megavolt ampere), 190 km of 765 kV (kilovolt) double circuit transmission line from existing Angul substation to the proposed substation at Paradeep, Odisha among other project related work. —*PTI*

Swiggy Instamart appoints Sairam as Senior VP

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Quick commerce platform Swiggy Instamart on Monday said it has appointed Sairam Krishnamurthy as the Senior Vice President & Chief Operating Officer. Krishnamurthy will oversee Swiggy Instamart's operating units, which include dark store operations, infrastructure operations, city growth and expansion, the company said in a statement. He brings over 18 years of experience in leadership roles spanning FMCG, consumer tech, and retail, the company said. Previously, he served as the Chief Operating Officer of the supermarket business at More Retail, where he also held the position of Chief Merchandising Officer, it added. He also had stints at Ola Mobility as Head of India Supply and a 14-year tenure at Hindustan Unilever Ltd in various roles in sales, marketing, and innovation, it added. He holds an engineering degree from BITS Pilani and a PGDM from IIM Bangalore. —*PTI*

No proposal to merge public sector insurance firms: Govt

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

The government on Monday said there is no proposal under consideration for merger of public sector general insurance companies.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said Rs 17,450 crore was infused during 2019-20 to 2021-22 in three PSU general insurance companies namely Oriental Insurance, National Insurance and United India Insurance to focus on their growth.

PHOTO: X/@MPPCHAUDHARY

Over Rs 177 cr lost on account of ATM/credit card, internet banking frauds

As much as Rs 177 crore was lost on account of credit, debit card and internet banking frauds in the 2023-24 fiscal, Parliament was informed on Monday. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said the amount of loss due to cyber fraud has increased from Rs 69.68 crore in FY23 to Rs 177.05 crore in FY24. The quantum of loss in FY22 was Rs 80.33 crore, it was Rs 50.10 crore in FY21 and Rs 44.22 crore in FY20.

UPI transactions jump 36 pc to Rs 60 lakh cr in Jun qtr

UPI transactions in the first three months of the current fiscal have grown over 36 per cent to Rs 60 lakh crore, Parliament was informed on Monday. As per the details of UPI transactions shared by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in the Lok Sabha, 4,122 crore UPI transactions worth Rs 60 lakh crore took place between April and June in 2024-25.

In the April-June period, 2,762 crore UPI transactions took place, having a value of Rs 44 lakh crore.

For the full fiscal 2023-24, 13,113 crore UPI transactions were made with a value of Rs 200 lakh crore. —*PTI*

NEW CHALLENGES AHEAD

Byju files caveat before SC against US-based creditor

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Byju Raveendran has filed a caveat before the Supreme Court against its US-based creditor Glas Trust Company LLC over the order passed by the insolvency appellate tribunal NCLAT.

The caveat was filed before the apex court on 3 August, a day after the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) passed an order restoring the board of edtech major after setting aside insolvency proceedings against it.

Glas Trust has opposed the Rs 158.9 crore dues settlement with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) alleging the money paid by Riju Raveendran (brother of Byju Raveendran) was tainted and was a case of "round-tripping".

Anticipating the US-based creditor would challenge the NCLAT order before the Supreme Court, Byju Raveendran had filed a caveat requesting to be heard before

A Caveat application is filed by a litigant to ensure that no order is passed against them without being heard PHOTO: PTI

the apex court passes any order on a plea filed by the US-based creditors.

A Caveat application is filed by a litigant to ensure that no order is passed against them without being heard.

The NCLAT had observed that the settlement arrived between the parties before the Committee of Creditors (CoC) could have been constituted and that the source of the payment being made "is not in dispute" nor related to the foreign funds as alleged by the US-based creditors.

The appellate tribunal also dismissed the allegation of 'round-tripping' levelled by Byju's US-based lenders, saying they failed to provide any evidence in support of their claims.

On 16 July, the Bengaluru bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) directed the initiation of Corporate Insolvency Resolution Proceedings (CIRP) against Byju's, admitting the plea filed by the BCCI.

The company's troubles began when it missed financial reporting deadlines two years ago and fell short of revenue projections by more than 50 per cent. —*PTI*

SEBI amends mutual fund rules to curb front-running

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Capital markets regulator SEBI has amended mutual fund norms requiring Asset Management Companies (AMCs) to put in place an mechanism to identify and deter front-running and insider trading in securities.

Additionally, the management of AMCs will be responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the institutional mechanism. Also, the regulator has directed AMCs to have a whistle-blower mechanism.

This came in the wake of SEBI's passing two orders regarding front-running cases involving Axis AMC and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).

Front-running refers to an illegal practice, where an entity trades based on advanced information from a stock broker or analyst before the information has been made available to clients.

To give these effects, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has amended mutual fund rules, which will come into force from 1 November. —*PTI*

India's service sector growth eases

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

India's services sector growth recorded another month of robust expansion in July, albeit at a slightly slower pace than in June, largely supported by robust demand conditions and investment in technology, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index was at 60.3 in July, down only fractionally from 60.5 in June.

In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"Service sector activity rose at a slightly slower pace in July, with new business increasing further, primarily driven by domestic demand. Looking ahead, services firms remained optimistic about the outlook for year ahead," Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said.

New export orders increased at the third-strongest pace since the inception of the series in September 2014, amid strengthening demand for Indian services from across the world. Some of the sources of rising export orders mentioned by panellists included Austria, Brazil, China, Japan, Singapore, the Netherlands and the US.

Output prices rose at the fastest pace in over 11 years PHOTO: PTI

- New export orders increased at the third-strongest pace since the inception of the series in 2014, amid strengthening demand

Favourable economic conditions and optimistic expectations for output supported recruitment among services firms, the survey said.

Consequently, output prices rose at the fastest pace in over 11 years. —*PTI*

'Indian economy likely to grow at 7-7.2%'

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

India's economy is expected to grow at 7-7.2 per cent in the current fiscal year driven by robust economic fundamentals and continuity in domestic policy reforms, Deloitte India said on Monday.

The August update of Deloitte's India Economic Outlook said several initiatives in the Union Budget 2024-25 toward improving agriculture productivity, creating jobs for the youth, and in manufacturing and addressing the challenge of access to finance for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), would help improve supply-side demand, curb inflation, and prop up consumer spending, especially in rural areas.

Deloitte India Economist Rumki Majumdar said, India will witness robust growth in the second half after a period of uncertainty in the first six months of the year.

Observing that strong economic fundamentals would drive GDP growth between

Indian economy grew at 8.2 per cent in 2023-24 PHOTO: PTI

- Deloitte India's growth projection is at par with that of RBI, which projected FY'25 growth at 7.2 per cent

7 per cent and 7.2 per cent in FY25, the Economic Outlook report said effectively addressing the urban-rural consumer spending gaps, inflation, and employment concerns can significantly enhance the affordability of aspirational rural consumers.

Deloitte India's growth projection is at par with that of RBI, which projected FY'25 growth at 7.2 per cent. It is higher than Finance Ministry's Economic Survey which estimated GDP expansion between 6.5-7 per cent.

The Indian economy grew at 8.2 per cent in 2023-24 fiscal year. —*PTI*

SAYS IPA DATA

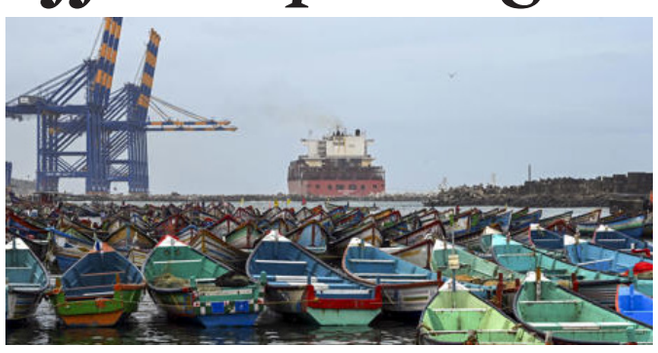
Cargo traffic at ports grows 5.92%

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

Cargo traffic at 12 major ports in the country grew 5.92 per cent to 70.08 million tonnes (MT) in July from 66.17 MT handled in the year-ago period, according to the data released by major ports' apex body Indian Ports Association.

The data also showed that 10 of these major ports logged positive growth in cargo traffic handling, while the remaining two saw a negative growth, as per the IPA.

The 12 major ports are Deendayal (Kandla), Mumbai, Mormugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Ennore (Kamarajar), Tuticorin (VO Chidambaranar), Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia) and Jawaharlal Nehru Port.



The data also showed that 10 of these major ports logged positive growth in cargo traffic handling PHOTO: PTI

In July, IPA said Cochin Port registered the maximum cargo growth at 24.77 per cent, followed by Visakhapatnam Port (10.80 per cent) and JN Port (9.07 per cent).

Chennai Port handled 8.89 per cent more traffic compared to July 2023, while cargo traffic at Deendayal Port and V O Chidambaranar Port grew 7.13 per cent and 6.74 per cent, respectively.

Similarly, Paradip Port logged 3.60 per cent growth in cargo handling, SMP, Kolkata Port 2.26 per cent and Kamarajar Port 0.69 per cent in July this year, IPA said.

The growth in cargo traffic at New Mangalore Port was recorded at 0.18 per cent during the month under review, it added.

The negative growth was witnessed at Mumbai Port with 1.23 per cent and Mormugao Port with 1 per cent, as per the IPA. —*PTI*

IndiGo starts business class 18 years after launch

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

India's leading low-cost carrier, IndiGo on Monday announced the introduction of business-class services for the first time since its inception. The announcement comes as the airline celebrates its 18th anniversary, marking a significant addition to its service offerings.

IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers today said, "Starting tomorrow, passengers travelling between metro cities will have the option to book business class seats on IndiGo flights."

While bookings will open immediately, the new business class service, however will be available for travel beginning only this November.

This move represents a major departure for IndiGo,

PHOTO: PTI

which has built its reputation on providing affordable, no-frills service. The introduction of a business class option could attract a new segment of travellers seeking added comfort and convenience on domestic routes.

IndiGo announced wide-body aircraft operation too on its 18 year of anniversary that by 2027 IndiGo will start IndiGo wide body services on Airbus 350 -900 planes. —*ANI*

COUNTRIES				
1. China	21	17	14	52
2. US	19	29	27	75
3. Aus	13	11	8	32
4. France	12	15	18	45
59. India	0	0	3	3

India waits with bated breath for golden boy Neeraj

The Indian star aims for a second gold

PARIS, 5 AUG

A man of many firsts in Indian athletics, Neeraj Chopra would be eyeing another piece of history with his javelin when he takes aim at his second Olympics amid expectations of a golden finish yet again.

His fabled consistency would be tested after a season that has seen him battle a nagging adductor niggle. He would begin his quest on Tuesday with the qualifications round from where the Haryana lad is expected to make the finals on 8 August.

A top podium finish will make Chopra only the fifth man in Olympics history to defend his title and the first Indian to win two gold medals in an individual event in the multi-sporting spectacle. Eric Lemming (Sweden; 1908 and 1912), Jonni Myyra (Finland; 1920 and 1924), Chopra's idol Jan Zelezny (Czech Republic; 1992, 1996 and 2000) and Andreas Thorkildsen (Norway; 2004 and 2008) are the only ones to have defended the men's javelin gold medals in the Olympics.

He has competed in just three events this year but the 26-year-old world champion is back in full flow in a season where none of his global competitors have done exceptionally well.

Chopra, who has a personal best of 89.94m, made a strong comeback by winning gold at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland on June 18 with a throw of 85.97m.

His coach later dismissed concerns surrounding Chopra's fitness, telling PTI that his adductor has no issues now and his ward has been in high intensity phase of training. One of the most consistent javelin throwers in recent times, Chopra has sent his spear below 85m mark just twice out of his 15 competitions since winning gold in the Tokyo Olympics. *—PTI*

CHOPRA'S BEST THROWS

KEY EVENTS

WRESTLING 3:00 PM

WOMEN'S FREESTYLE 50KG, 1/8 FINALS

Vinesh Phogat, 29, Haryana

He first Indian woman wrestler to win a gold at both the Commonwealth and Asian Games.

ATHLETICS 3:20 PM

MEN'S JAVELIN THROW, QUALIFICATION ROUND

Neeraj Chopra, 26, Haryana

He is the first Asian athlete to win an Olympic Gold medal in javelin and the first Asian to win gold in his event at the World Championship.

Kishore Jena, 28, Odisha

Jena won the silver medal at the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, with a personal record throw of 87.54m.

HOCKEY 10:30 PM

MEN'S TOURNAMENT, SEMI-FINAL

India vs Germany

TABLE TENNIS 1:30 PM IST

MEN'S TEAM-ROUND OF 16

India vs China

Manu to be India's flag-bearer for closing event

PARIS, 5 AUG

India's two-time Olympic medalist and star shooter Manu Bhaker will be the flag bearer for the country at the closing ceremony of the ongoing Paris Olympics 2024.

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) issued a statement confirming the development on Monday. The choice of the male flag-bearer will be made later. Also, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) posted a video of her reacting to being chosen as a flag-bearer. "UNBRIDLED JOY! @realmanubhaker finds out she has been chosen to be a flag-bearer at the closing ceremony of the #Paris2024Olympics. #Cheer4Bharat," SAI Media said in the post. Bhaker brought her A-game in Paris and broke numerous accolades to claim two bronze medals in the Summer Games.

The Paris Olympics has been a redemption for the 22-year-old shooter. During the 10m air pistol qualification round in the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, her gun malfunctioned, which led to a loss of time. *—ANI*

Gold medallist Ceccon takes a nap in the park

PARIS, 5 AUG

The 100m backstroke event Olympic gold medallist Thomas Ceccon who complaint about the pathetic conditions in the Games village was spotted sleeping in a park at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

The image of Italian athlete sleeping on a white towel under a tree in the park was soon posted by the Saudi Arabia rower Husein Alireza.

Many other athletics like Coco Gauff, Ariarne Titmus and Assia Touati find serious faults with the arrangements.

Aussie swimmer Titmus also felt that she could have broken the world record if she had given better accommodation.

—Salar News with agencies

Maheshwari-Naruka pair misses Bronze by a whisker

CHATEAUROUX, 5 AUG

The Indian shooting duo of Maheshwari Chauhan and Anant Jeet Singh Naruka fought tooth and nail before missing out on a bronze medal by a whisker in the skeet mixed team event, finishing fourth at the Paris Olympics here on Monday.

Maheshwari and Naruka shot 43 to finish fourth behind China's Yiting Jiang and Jianlin Lyu (44) in a thrilling match for the bronze medal. Earlier, the Indians finished fourth in the qualification after both teams were tied on 146 at the end of the three-round, 150-shot process, forcing a shoot-off.

In the qualification, Maheshwari shone with 50/50 in her final two rounds while Naruka notched scores of 25, 23 and 24 in the three rounds. What swung the match in China's favour was the incredible form of Lyu who did not miss a single shot on way to the podium, even as his partner Jiang recovered after a rare three straight misses to help the pair to victory.

Italy's Gabriele Rossetti and Diana Bacosi shot 149/150 to equal the world record in qualification. They were joined by American Vincent Hancock and Austen Jewell Smith (148) in the gold medal match.

Also, Indian grappler Nisha Dahiya won her opening women's freestyle 68kg bout against Ukraine's Sova Rizhko 6-4 as the wrestling competition got under-way at Paris on Monday. *—PTI*

Sen falters again, Bronze medal slips out of hand

India's Lakshya Sen acknowledges fans after his men's singles match on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

PARIS, 5 AUG

Lakshya Sen's hopes of winning an Olympic medal on Games debut went up in smoke after he lost in three games to Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia in the bronze playoff here on Monday.

The 22-year-old from Almora squandered a one-game advantage as world number 7 Lee found his attack just in time to register a 13-21 21-16 21-11 win to secure the bronze. "I had my chances in the second set and could have definitely done better. But credit to him, he played a really good game. I think at the moment I'm just not able to think right now," a crestfallen Sen said after the match.

"I came well prepared for this match as well. It has been quite a tough week overall. But yeah, the fatigue kept on building. But I mean, I was ready to give my 100 per cent in this match."

His loss means that it would be the first time in 12 years that India will return without a badminton medal from the Olympics. However, the youngster did get a first against his name in his maiden Games appearance.

The 2021 world championships bronze and 2022 Commonwealth Games gold-winner signed off as India's first male shuttler to reach the Olympic semifinals. *—PTI*

Denmark's Viktor Axelsen retained his title by demolishing Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn in Paris. Axelsen beats him in 21-11, 21-11 in 52 minutes **PHOTOS: AP/X-@BADDK**

Biles takes Silver as Andrade wins floor Gold

PARIS, 5 AUG

Simone Biles missed out on a fourth gold medal of the Paris Olympics after some messy landings left her with silver on floor, as Rebeca Andrade shone to take the title. The 27-year-old American - who won team, all-around and vault gold - landed with both feet outside the floor area twice, costing her 0.300 apiece, and scored 14.133 to sit 0.033 behind Andrade.

Andrade had the crowd at the Bercy Arena on its feet with her lively routine, setting an early mark as the second gymnast to go. *—BBC News*

Wrestling: Dahiya loses QFs bout

PARIS, 5 AUG

Indian grappler Nisha Dahiya was left sobbing in acute pain after she lost her quarterfinal bout against North Korea's Pak Sol Gum 8-10 in the women's 68 kg freestyle category at the Paris Olympics here on Monday. Leading 8-1 at one point in time with just over 90 seconds left, Nisha sustained a serious injury on her right hand, which left her in agonising pain as she wept inconsolably. Nisha didn't have any strength left in her right hand and it became a cakewalk for the North Korean. *—PTI*

US helps countries grow women's basketball

VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ, 5 AUG

Germany has lots of players who can score. The Germans knew they needed a point guard for the Paris Games with the country making its Olympic debut in women's basketball.

Alexis Peterson, a native of Columbus, Ohio, has proven to be a perfect fit.

The guard who played at Syracuse in college has helped Germany qualify for Wednesday's quarterfinals in Paris, and German coach Lisa Thomaidis said Peterson has been everything they wanted.

"Ball control, that's always been the issue for us," Thomaidis said. "We've had to kind of do it by committee. We've never really had a true point guard. We've been able to, you know, do it OK. But to get to that next level? We knew that she was someone that would be a huge help."

Peterson's not the only American abroad in these Olympics playing for other countries. The reason? The stacked pipeline of US talent is essentially impossible to crack, and a FIBA rule allows countries to tap players with dual citizenships or a player who becomes a naturalized citizen

For Peterson, it's been a long road. Now 29, she was drafted 15th overall in 2017 by the WNBA's Seattle Storm. She spent six seasons bouncing around the WNBA from Indiana, Phoenix and the Las Vegas Aces. She's played in Israel, Poland and France. *—AP*

Ex English batter Graham Thorpe is no more

LONDON, 5 AUG

Former England and Surrey batter Graham Thorpe has died aged 55 after battling a "serious illness" since 2022, the country's cricket board announced on Monday. Considered one of the finest batters of his generation, Thorpe was hospitalised shortly after being named the head coach of Afghanistan in 2022 but the details of his medical condition are not known. He is survived by his wife Amanda and four children, Henry, Amelia, Kitty and Emma. "It is with great sadness that the England Cricket Board (ECB) shares the news that Graham Thorpe, Member of Order of the British Empire, has passed away," ECB said, without giving the exact cause of his death. Thorpe began his Test career in 1993 with an Ashes century and repeated the feat on the return tour, in Perth in February 1995. *—PTI*

AFTER OLYMPICS

Manu's coach, Rana could be brought back into NRAI fold

CHATEAUROX, 5 AUG

Jaspal Rana's contributions behind Manu Bhaker's remarkable transformation into a double Olympic medallist will not go unnoticed as the national shooting federation mulls bringing the Dronacharya Awardee coach back into its fold.

Rana, who has his own way of working with the shooters, and the people heading the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) over the years, have not been the best of friends owing to their different approaches.

But now, old "issues have been resolved", said Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo, who has been heading the NRAI since former president Raninder Singh quit the post under the sports code. After his hugely successful second stint as Manu's personal coach, Rana could get a job in the Indian shooting setup next. Three years after a fallout between the two, there are now talks that he could be made a high performance director or the national pistol coach.

Manu bhaker and Jaspal Rana **PHOTO: PTI**

The legendary shooter had earlier served as the junior national pistol coach, overseeing the progress of the likes of Bhaker and many other young shooters. "I don't think we have ever ignored Jaspal's contributions. There were some issues earlier, obviously they have been resolved, he has been working with Manu for the last so many months, and this has been with the consent and approval of the NRAI," said Singh Deo, the senior vice president at NRAI. *—PTI*

PHOTO: BBC

Gallagher agrees to £33m Atletico Madrid move

MADRID, 5 AUG

Chelsea midfielder Conor Gallagher has agreed to join Atletico Madrid. The Blues had accepted a £33m offer from the Spanish side last week but there were significant concerns about whether the England international was interested in making the move. But on Sunday night Gallagher, 24, told Atletico officials he is happy to make the switch. The England international is now expected to fly and complete his medical and contract signing, which would end his 18-year spell at Stamford Bridge. *—BBC News*

ICC says, monitoring situation in Bangladesh

NEW DELHI, 5 AUG

The ICC's internal security team is monitoring the unrest in Bangladesh, which has forced Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign and flee the country, but it will wait and watch before deciding the fate of the Women's T20 World Cup scheduled there in October.

The event is to be organised from October 3 to 20. An interim government will be taking over in Bangladesh, Army Chief General Waqar-uz-Zaman announced on Monday in Dhaka amid massive protests against the Hasina government that claimed more than 100 lives in the last two days.

For the ICC, it is a simple "wait and watch" policy for now. "The ICC has an independent security monitoring system across all its member nations. The situation is being monitored closely but with seven weeks left for the tournament to begin, it will be too early to comment whether the tournament will be shifted from Bangladesh," an ICC board member told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Bangladesh has been witnessing fierce demonstrations over a controversial quota system that reserves 30 per cent of jobs for the families of veterans who fought the 1971 liberation war. The ICC source said a similar situation of unrest was there in Sri Lanka in March 2022 when protesters stormed former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa's official residence citing corruption and inflation.

However, the Australian cricket team had travelled there for a bilateral series in June. The World in Bangladesh is scheduled to be held in Dhaka and Sylhet. *—PTI*